


Leo Tolstoy.







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Illustrated Cabinet Edition

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DEATH OF IVÁN ÍLICH  
DRAMATIC WORKS  
THE KREUTZER SONATA

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THE DEATH OF IVÁN ILÍCH

1884-86



# THE DEATH OF IVÁN ILÍCH

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## I.

IN the large building of the court institutions, during a pause in the case of the Melvínskis, the associates and the prosecuting attorney met in the cabinet of Iván Egórovich Shébek, and started a conversation on the famous Krasóvski case. Fédor Vasílevich grew excited, proving that it was not subject to their jurisdiction. Iván Egórovich stuck to his opinion, while Peter Ivánovich, who had not entered into the discussion from the start, took no part in it, and looked through the *Gazette* which had been handed to him.

"Gentlemen," he said, "Iván Ilích is dead."

"Is it possible?"

"Here, read it," he said to Fédor Vasílevich, giving him the fresh-smelling number of the newspaper.

Within a black border was the following announcement: "Praskóvya Fédorovna Golovín with sincere sorrow informs her relatives and acquaintances of the demise of her beloved husband, Iván Ilích Golovín, associate member of the court, which took place on February 4th of this year, 1882. The funeral will be on Friday, at one o'clock P. M."

Iván Ilích was an associate of the gentlemen assembled, and they all loved him. He had been ill for several weeks: it was said that his disease was incurable. His post was left open for him, but it was rumoured that in

case of his death Aleksyéev would probably be appointed in his place, and that Vínnikov or Shtábel would get Aleksyéev's place. Therefore, upon hearing about Iván Ilích's death, the first thought of every one of the gentlemen collected in the cabinet was as to the significance which this death might have on the changes or promotions of the associates themselves or of their friends.

"Now I shall no doubt get Shtábel's place or Vínnikov's," thought Fédor Vasílevich. "I was promised that long ago, and this promotion will mean for me eight hundred roubles increase, in addition to the chancery."

"I must now ask for the transfer of my brother-in-law from Kalúga," thought Peter Ivánovich. "My wife will be very glad. She will no longer be able to say that I am not doing anything for her relatives."

"I never thought he would get up again," Peter Ivánovich said, aloud. "I am sorry."

"What was the matter with him, anyway?"

"The doctors could not make it out. That is, they did, but each of them differently. When I saw him the last time, I thought he was getting better."

"And here I have not called on him since the holidays. I was meaning to all the time."

"Well, did he have any estate?"

"I think his wife has a little something, but nothing of any consequence."

"Yes, I shall have to go there; but they have been living a terrible distance away."

"That is, from your house. From your house everything is a distance away."

"You really cannot forgive me for living on the other side of the river," Peter Ivánovich said, smiling at Shébek. And they began to talk of the extent of the city distances, and went back to the court session.

In addition to the reflections evoked in each of them by this death about the transpositions and possible changes

in the service likely to happen in consequence of it, the very fact of the death of a close friend evoked in all those who heard of it, as it always does, a feeling of joy because it was Iván Ilích who had died and not they.

"How is this? It is he who is dead, and not I," each of them thought or felt.

But the close acquaintances, Iván Ilích's so-called friends, involuntarily thought also of this, that now they would have to perform some very tedious duties of propriety and go to the mass and call on the widow to express their condolence.

His nearest friends were Fédor Vasílevich and Peter Ivánovich.

Peter Ivánovich had been his schoolmate while studying law, and considered himself under obligation to Iván Ilích.

At dinner Peter Ivánovich gave his wife the news of Iván Ilích's death, and his reflections as to the possibility of his brother-in-law's transfer to their circuit, and, without lying down to rest himself, he put on his dress coat and drove to Iván Ilích's house.

At the entrance to Iván Ilích's apartments stood a carriage and two cabs. Down-stairs, in the antechamber, near the hat-rack, and leaning against the wall, stood a tinselled coffin-lid with its tassels and burnished galloons. Two ladies in black were taking off their fur coats. One of them, Iván Ilích's sister, he knew; the other was a stranger to him. Peter Ivánovich's friend, Schwarz, was coming down-stairs, and, seeing the newcomer from the upper step, he stopped and winked to him, as if to say: "Iván Ilích has managed things stupidly; you and I fixed things better."

Schwarz's face with its English side-whiskers and his whole lean figure in the dress coat had, as always, an elegant solemnity about them, and this solemnity, which always contradicted Schwarz's character of playfulness, had here its particular salt. So Peter Ivánovich thought.



Peter Ivánovich allowed the ladies to precede him, and followed them up the staircase. Schwarz did not start to go down, but stopped up-stairs. Peter Ivánovich knew why he did so: he evidently wanted to make an engagement to play a game of vint that day. The ladies went up-stairs to see the widow, and Schwarz, with seriously compressed, strong lips and playful glance, with a motion of his brows showed Peter Ivánovich to the right, to the room where the body lay.

Peter Ivánovich entered, as is always the case, perplexed as to what he would have to do. One thing he knew, and that was that under such circumstances it would never do any harm to make the sign of the cross. But he was not quite sure whether he ought also to make obeisances, and so he chose the middle way: upon entering the room, he began to make the sign of the cross and acted as though he were bowing. At the same time, as much as the motion of his hands and of his head permitted it, he surveyed the room. Two young men, one of them a gymnasiast, — he thought they were nephews, — were leaving the room, making the sign of the cross. An old woman stood motionless and a lady with queerly raised brows was telling her something in a whisper. A sexton, in a Prince Albert, a wide-awake, determined man, was reading something in a loud voice with an expression which excluded every contradiction; Gerásim, a peasant of the buffet-room, was with light steps strewing something on the floor, in front of Peter Ivánovich. As Peter Ivánovich saw this, he at once caught the light odour of the decomposing body.

During his last call on Iván Ilích, Peter Ivánovich had seen this peasant in the cabinet: he had been performing the duty of a nurse, and Iván Ilích was particularly fond of him. Peter Ivánovich kept making the sign of the cross and slightly inclined his head in a central direction between the coffin, the sexton, and the images on the

table in the corner of the room. Afterward, when this motion of making the sign of the cross with his hand appeared to him to have lasted long enough, he stopped and began to look at the corpse.

The dead man was lying, as all dead men lie, quite heavily, in corpse-like fashion sinking with the stark members of his body in the bedding of the coffin, with an eternally bent head on a pillow, and displayed, as corpses always do, his yellow, waxen brow with bare spots over his sunken temples, and a towering nose which seemed to be pressing against the upper lip. He was very much changed and much thinner than when Peter Ivánovich had seen him the last time, but, as is the case with all corpses, his face was more beautiful and, above all, more significant than that of a living man. On his face there was an expression of this, that what was necessary to do had been done, and done correctly. Besides, in this expression there was also a rebuke or reminder to the living.

This reminder seemed to Peter Ivánovich out of place, or, at least, having no reference to him. For some reason he felt ill at ease, and so hastened to cross himself again and, as it appeared to him, too precipitously and out of keeping with the proprieties, turned around and walked toward the door.

Schwarz was waiting for him in a middle room, spreading his legs wide, and with both his hands playing behind his back with his silk hat. One glance at Schwarz's playful, natty, and elegant figure refreshed Peter Ivánovich. Peter Ivánovich understood that he, Schwarz, was standing above such things, and did not surrender himself to crushing impressions. His very glance said: the incident of the mass for Iván Ilích can by no means serve as a sufficient reason for declaring the order of the session disturbed, that is, that nothing could keep him that very evening from clicking with the deck of cards after break-

ing the seal, while the lackey would place four fresh candles on the table; altogether there was no cause for supposing that this incident could keep them from passing an agreeable evening. Indeed, he said so in a whisper to Peter Ivánovich as he passed by, proposing that they meet for the game at the house of Fédor Vasílevich. But it was apparently not Peter Ivánovich's fate to have a game of vint that evening. Praskóvya Fédorovna, an undersized, fat woman, who, in spite of all efforts to the contrary, had been expanding all the time downward from the shoulders, dressed in black, with her head covered with lace, and with the same upturned brows as those of the lady who was standing at the coffin, came out of her apartments with other ladies and, taking them to the door of the room where the dead man lay, said: "The mass will be read at once. Pass in."

Schwarz made an indefinite bow and stopped, evidently neither accepting nor declining the offer. When Praskóvya Fédorovna recognized Peter Ivánovich, she sighed, went up close to him, took his hand, and said: "I know that you were a true friend to Iván Ilích," and looked at him, expecting from him an action which would correspond to these words. Peter Ivánovich knew that, as it was necessary there to make the sign of the cross, so here it was necessary to press her hand, to sigh, and to say: "Believe me!" And so he did. Having done it, he felt that the desired result was achieved: both he and she were touched.

"Come with me: before it begins there, I have to talk with you," said the widow. "Give me your arm."

Peter Ivánovich gave her his arm, and they went to the inner apartments, past Schwarz, who gave Iván Ilích a sad wink.

"There goes the vint! You must not be angry with us if we choose another partner. If you get off, we may play a five-handed game," said his playful glance.

Peter Ivánovich sighed more deeply and more sadly still, and Praskóvya Féodorovna pressed his hand gratefully. Upon entering her drawing-room, which was papered with pink cretonne and was illuminated by a dim lamp, they sat down at the table, — she on a divan, and Peter Ivánovich on a pouffe with crushed springs and unevenly yielding seat. Praskóvya Féodorovna was on the point of cautioning him and asking him to take another seat, but found this cautioning incompatible with her present condition, and so changed her mind.

Seating himself on this pouffe, Peter Ivánovich recalled how Iván Ilích had appointed this room and had consulted him in regard to this very pink cretonne with its green leaves. As the widow, on her way to seat herself, passed by the table (the drawing-room was altogether too full of trifles and of furniture), the black lace of her black mantilla caught on the carving of the table. Peter Ivánovich raised himself in order to disentangle it, and the liberated pouffe began to agitate under him and to push him. The widow began to free her lace herself, and Peter Ivánovich sat down again, choking the riotous pouffe. But the widow did not free the lace entirely, and Peter Ivánovich raised himself again, and again the pouffe became agitated and even clicked. When all this was ended, she took out her clean cambric handkerchief and began to weep. But Peter Ivánovich was cooled off by the episode with the lace and by the struggle with the pouffe, and sat scowling. This awkward situation was interrupted by Sokolóv, Iván Ilích's butler, who came to report that the lot in the cemetery which Praskóvya Féodorovna had chosen would cost two hundred roubles. She stopped weeping and, looking at Peter Ivánovich with the glance of a victim, said in French that it was very hard for her. Peter Ivánovich made a silent sign, which expressed unquestionable assurance that that could not be otherwise.

"Do smoke, if you please," she said, in a magnanimous and at the same time crushed voice, and proceeded to busy herself with Sokolov concerning the price of the lot. Peter Ivánovich heard, while starting to smoke, how she inquired very circumstantially about the different prices of the land and settled on the lot which she was going to take. Having finished about the lot, she also made her arrangements about the singers. Sokolov went away.

"I do everything myself," she said to Peter Ivánovich, pushing aside the albums which were lying on the table, and, observing that the ashes were threatening the table, she without delay moved up the ash-tray to Peter Ivánovich, and said: "I consider it a bit of hypocrisy to assure people that my grief prevents me from attending to practical matters. On the contrary, if there is anything which can, not console, but distract me, it is the cares concerning him." She again drew out her handkerchief, as though getting ready to cry, and suddenly, as though overcoming herself, she shook herself, and began to speak calmly. "But I want to ask you about a certain matter."

Peter Ivánovich made a bow, without permitting the springs of the pouffe, which began to stir under him, to get away.

"The last three days he suffered terribly."

"Suffered terribly?" asked Peter Ivánovich.

"Oh, terribly! The last minutes, nay hours, he never stopped crying. It was unbearable. I cannot understand how I stood it; you could hear him three rooms off. Oh, what I have endured!"

"And was he really in his right mind?" asked Peter Ivánovich.

"Yes," she whispered, "to the last minute. He bade us good-bye within fifteen minutes of his death, and also asked us to take Volodya away."

The thought of the suffering of this man, whom he had



known so closely, at first as a merry boy, as his school-mate, and later, when he was grown, as his partner, suddenly terrified him, in spite of the disagreeable consciousness of his hypocrisy and of that of the woman. He again saw that brow and that nose which pressed against the lip, and he felt terribly for himself.

"Three days of frightful suffering, and death. Why, this may happen to me now, any minute," he thought, and for a moment he felt terribly. But immediately, he did not know himself how, the habitual thought occurred to him that this had happened to Iván Ilích, and not to him, and that this should not and could not happen to him; that if he thought in this manner, he submitted to a gloomy mood, which he ought not to do, as was evident from Schwarz's face. Having reflected thus, Peter Ivánovich calmed himself and interestedly inquired about the details of Iván Ilích's end, as though death was an accident which was peculiar to Iván Ilích but by no means to him.

After many details of the really terrible physical sufferings which Iván Ilích had endured (these details Peter Ivánovich learned only from the way these torments of Iván Ilích affected the nerves of Praskóvya Féodorovna), the widow apparently found it necessary to pass over to business.

"Oh, Peter Ivánovich, it is so hard, so terribly hard, so terribly hard!" and she started weeping again.

Peter Ivánovich sighed and waited for her to clear her nose. When she had done so, he said, "Believe me —" and she became again voluble and made a clear breast of what evidently was her chief business with him. This business consisted in questions as to how to obtain money from the government on the occasion of her husband's death. She made it appear as though she were asking Peter Ivánovich's advice in regard to the pension; but he saw that she knew down to the minutest details, what he did not

know, what could be got out of the government in consequence of this death, but that she wanted to find out if it were not possible in some way to get a little more money out of it. Peter Ivánovich tried to discover a means to do so, but, after reflecting a little and out of propriety scolding our government for its stinginess, he said that he thought that nothing more could be got from it. Thereupon she sighed and obviously was trying to find a means for ridding herself of her visitor. He understood this, and so put out his cigarette, pressed her hand, and went into the antechamber.

In the dining-room with a clock, to which Iván Ilích had taken such a fancy that he had purchased it in a bric-à-brac shop, Peter Ivánovich met a priest and a few acquaintances who had come to be present at the mass, and saw Iván Ilích's daughter, a pretty young lady, with whom he was acquainted. She had a gloomy, determined, almost angry look. She bowed to Peter Ivánovich, as though he were guilty of something. Back of the daughter stood, with the same offended look, a wealthy young man, an examining magistrate and an acquaintance of Peter Ivánovich, who, as he had heard, was her fiancé. He bowed dejectedly and was on the point of passing into the room of the dead man, when from under the staircase appeared the small form of a gymnasiast, Iván Ilích's son, who resembled his father terribly. This was little Iván Ilích, such as Peter Ivánovich remembered him in the law school. His eyes were small and such as one generally sees in impure boys of thirteen or fourteen years of age. Upon noticing Peter Ivánovich, the boy began to frown sternly and shamefacedly. Peter Ivánovich nodded to him, and entered the room of the dead man. The mass began, and there were the candles, groans, incense, tears, sobs. Peter Ivánovich stood frowning, looking at his feet in front of him. He did not once cast a glance on the dead man, and did not to the end

succumb to the dissolving influences, and was one of the first to leave the room. There was no one in the ante-chamber. Gerásim, the peasant of the buffet-room, leaped out from the room of the deceased man, and with his powerful hands rummaged among all the fur coats, in order to find the one which belonged to Peter Ivánovich and which he handed to him.

"Well, friend Gerásim?" said Peter Ivánovich, to be saying something. "Are you sorry?"

"It is God's will. We shall all of us be there," said Gerásim, displaying his white, solid peasant teeth; like a man in the heat of intense work, he opened the door in lively fashion, called the coachman, helped Peter Ivánovich in, and jumped back to the porch, as though considering what else he had to do.

It was especially pleasant for Peter Ivánovich to breathe the pure air, after the odour of incense, of the dead body, and of carbolic acid.

"Whither do you command me to drive you?" asked the coachman.

"It is not yet late, — I will make a call on Fédor Vasílevich."

And Peter Ivánovich departed. He indeed found them at the end of the first rubber, so that it was convenient for him to come in as the fifth.

## II.

IVÁN ILÍCH's past life was simple and most common, and yet most terrible.

Iván Ilích died at the age of forty-five years, as a member of the court of justice. He was the son of an official who had in various ministries and departments of St. Petersburg made that career which brings people to that state from which, though it becomes evident to them that they are no good for the performance of any essential duty, they none the less cannot be expelled, both on account of their long past service and their ranks, and so receive imaginary, fictitious places, and non-fictitious thousands, from six to ten, with which they live to a good old age.

Such had been the privy councillor, the useless member of all kinds of useless establishments, Ilyá Efímovich Golovín.

He had three sons: Iván Ilích was his second; the eldest had made a similar career to that of his father, only in a different ministry, and was rapidly approaching that official age when one attains that inertia of salary. The third son was a failure. He had continuously ruined himself in various places, and was now serving with the railways, and his father and his brothers, but especially their wives, not only disliked meeting him, but without some extreme need did not even mention his existence. His sister was married to Baron Gref, a St. Petersburg official like his father-in-law.

Iván Ilích was "*le phénix de la famille*," as they said. He was not as cold and as precise as the elder, and not

as desperate as the younger. He was intermediate between them, — a clever, lively, agreeable, and decent man. He attended the department of law together with his younger brother. The younger brother did not graduate, and was expelled in his fifth year, while Iván Ilích graduated high in his class. Even while studying law he was what he was later, during his whole life, — a capable, jolly, and affable man, who none the less strictly carried out what he considered to be his duty; and he considered his duty that which was so considered by men in the higher spheres. Neither as a boy nor as a grown man did he curry favour with any one, but from his earliest youth he tended, like a fly to the light, to men who occupied the highest positions in the world, adopted their manner and their views of life, and established friendly relations with them. All the distractions of childhood and youth had passed for him without leaving any great traces; he abandoned himself to sensuality and ambition, and toward the end to the liberalism of the higher classes, but all this within certain limits which his feeling indicated to him correctly.

He had committed acts, while studying law, which had presented themselves to him as great abominations and had inspired him with contempt for himself at the time that he had committed them, but later, when he observed that such acts were also committed by distinguished personages and were not considered to be bad, he, without acknowledging them to be good, completely forgot them and was by no means grieved at the thought of them.

Having graduated from the law school in the tenth class and having received from his father money with which to provide himself with clothes, Iván Ilích ordered them at Charmeur's, attached to his fob a small medal with the inscription, "*Respice finem*," bade good-bye to the prince and to his tutor, dined with his companions at Donon's, and with new trunk, underwear, clothes,



shaving and toilet appurtenances, and a plaid, all of them ordered and bought in the best shops, departed for the province to take the place of an official on the governor's special business, which his father had procured for him.

In the province Iván Ilích at once arranged the same easy and pleasant position for himself that he had enjoyed in the law school. He served, made a career for himself, and at the same time passed his time pleasantly and decently; now and then he journeyed to the counties at the command of the authorities, bore himself with dignity both toward those who stood above him and those who stood beneath him, and with precision and incorruptible honesty, which he could not help but be proud of, carried out the business entrusted to him, especially in matters of the dissenters.

In matters of his service he was, in spite of his youth and proneness to light merriment, extremely reserved, official, and even severe; but in matters of society he was often playful and witty, and always good-hearted, decent, and a "*bon enfant*," as was said of him by his chief and his chief's wife, at whose house he was a close friend.

There was also in the province a liaison with one of the ladies, who obtruded herself on the dandyish jurist; and there was a modiste, and drinking bouts with visiting aids-de-camp, and drives to a distant street after supper; there was also a subserviency to the chief, and even to the wife of the chief, but all this bore upon itself such an elevated tone of decency that it could not be called by any bad words: it all only fitted in with the French saying, "*Il faut que jeunesse se passe*." Everything took place with clean hands, in clean shirts, with French words, and, above all else, in the very highest society, consequently with the approval of most distinguished persons.

Thus Iván Ilích served for five years, and a change was made in the service. There appeared new institutions of law, and new men were needed.

Iván Ilích became such a new man.

Iván Ilích was offered the place of examining magistrate, and accepted it, although this place was in another Government and it became necessary for him to give up the established relations and establish new ones. Iván Ilích was seen off by his friends, a group was formed, a silver cigarette case was presented to him, and he departed for the new place.

Iván Ilích was the same *comme il faut*, decent examining magistrate, who knew how to separate his official duties from his private life and who inspired general respect, that he had been as an official on special business. The post of the examining magistrate itself presented much more interest and attraction to him than the one he had formerly held. In his former office it had been a pleasure to him with an easy gait, and wearing Charmeur's undress uniform, to pass by the trembling petitioners, who were waiting for an audience, and by the official people, who envied him, and to enter directly the chief's private room and sit down with him at tea while smoking a cigarette, but there had been but few people who were directly dependent on his will. Such people had been chiefs of rural police and dissenters, whenever he was sent out on some special business; and he had been fond of treating such people, who were dependent on him, politely, almost chummily, and of making them feel that he, who might crush them, was treating them in a friendly and simple manner. There had been but few such people.

But now, while he was an examining magistrate, Iván Ilích felt that all, all without exception, — the most important and most self-satisfied people, — were in his hands, and that he needed only to write certain words on a paper with a certain heading, when such an important, self-satisfied man would be brought to him in the capacity of defendant or witness, who, if he had no mind to let him sit down, would stand before him and answer his ques-

tions. Iván Ilích never misused this power and, on the contrary, tried to mitigate its expression; but the consciousness of this power and the possibility of mitigating it formed for him the chief interest and attraction of his new service. In the service itself, more especially in his examinations, he very soon acquired the manner of removing from himself all those circumstances which had nothing to do with the service, and of simplifying every extremely complicated matter to a form which would permit the matter to be reflected merely externally on paper, and which completely excluded his personal view and, above all, made it possible to observe the whole necessary formality. This was a new business, and he was one of the first men who in practice worked out the application of the statutes of the year 1864.

On arriving in the new city, in the capacity of examining magistrate, Iván Ilích made new acquaintances and connections, arranged matters for himself anew, and assumed a somewhat different tone. He placed himself in a certain dignified aloofness from the provincial authorities, chose the best circle consisting of members of the legal profession and of the wealthy gentry who lived in the city, and assumed a tone of slight dissatisfaction with the government, of moderate liberalism, and of cultured civism. Besides this, Iván Ilích, though making no change in the elegance of his toilet, in this new office stopped shaving his chin and permitted his beard to grow as it listed.

In this new city Iván Ilích's life again arranged itself in a most agreeable manner: the society which found fault with the governor was jolly and pleasant, the salary was larger, and not a small degree of pleasure was at that time added by the whist which Iván Ilích began to play, being possessed of the ability of playing cards merrily, and reflecting rapidly and very shrewdly, so that on the whole he was always winning.



After two years of service in the new city, Iván Ilích met his future wife. Praskóvya Féodorovna Míkkel was the most attractive, clever, and brilliant girl of the circle in which he moved. Among the other amusements and relaxations from the labours of the examining magistrate, Iván Ilích established playful, light relations with Praskóvya Féodorovna.

Iván Ilích had been in the habit of dancing while he was an official on special business ; but being an examining magistrate, he danced only as an exception. He now danced in this sense that, though he was serving in the new institutions and belonged to the fifth class, he could prove, when it came to dancing, that in this line he was better than anybody else. Thus he occasionally danced with Praskóvya Féodorovna toward the end of the evening, and mainly during these dances conquered her. She fell in love with him. He did not have any clear and definite intention of getting married, but when the girl fell in love with him, he put this question to himself: "Indeed, why can't I get married?"

Miss Praskóvya Féodorovna belonged to a good family of the gentry, and she had some little property. Iván Ilích could count on a more brilliant match, but this one was not bad, either. Iván Ilích had his salary, and she, so he hoped, would have as much again. It was a good alliance; she was a sweet, pretty, and absolutely decent woman. To say that Iván Ilích married because he loved his fiancée and found in her a sympathetic relation to his views of life would be as unjust as saying that he married because the people of his society approved of the match. Iván Ilích married for two reasons: he was doing something agreeable for himself in acquiring such a wife, and at the same time did what people in high positions regarded as regular.

And so Iván Ilích got married.

The process of marrying itself and the first period of

his marital life, with the conjugal affection, new furniture, new dishes, new linen, passed very well until his wife's pregnancy, so that he began to think that his marriage would not only not impair that character of the easy, agreeable, merry, and always decent life, which was approved of by society and which he regarded as peculiar to life in general, but that it would even intensify it. But beginning with the first month of his wife's pregnancy, there appeared something new, unexpected, disagreeable, oppressive, and indecent, which it had been impossible to expect, and impossible to get rid of.

Without the least provocation, as it seemed to Iván Ilích, "*de gaité de cœur*," as he said to himself, his wife began to impair the pleasure and decency of life: she was without any cause jealous of him, demanded his attentions, nagged him in everything, and made disagreeable and vulgar scenes with him.

At first Iván Ilích hoped to free himself from the unpleasantness of this situation by means of that same light and decorous relation to life which had helped him out before; he tried to ignore his wife's disposition and continued to live lightly and agreeably, as before: he invited his friends to his house, to have a game, and tried himself to go to the club or to his friends; but his wife one day began with such energy to apply vulgar words to him, and continued so stubbornly to scold him every time that he did not comply with her demands, having apparently determined not to stop until he should submit, that is, should stay at home and experience tedium like herself, that he became frightened. He comprehended that marital life, at least with his wife, did not always contribute to the pleasures and the decency of life, but on the contrary frequently violated them, and that, therefore, it was necessary for him to defend himself against these violations. Iván Ilích began to look for means for this. His service was the one thing which impressed Praskóvya

Fédorovna, and Iván Ilích began by means of his service and the duties resulting from it to struggle with his wife, hedging in his independent world.

With the birth of a child, with the attempts at nursing it and the various failures in this matter, with the real and imaginary diseases of the child and of the mother, when Iván Ilích's coöperation was demanded, though he was unable to comprehend a thing about these matters, the necessity for hedging in his world outside his family became more imperative for him.

In measure as his wife became more irritable and more exacting, Iván Ilích more and more transferred the centre of his life into his service. He began to love his service more and grew to be more ambitious than he had been before.

Very soon, not more than a year after his marriage, Iván Ilích understood that marital life, though it presented certain comforts of life, in reality was a very complex and difficult matter, in relation to which, in order to perform one's duty, that is, to lead a decent life, which is approved by society, it was necessary to work out a certain relation, just as in the case of the service.

And Iván Ilích worked out such a relation to the marital life. He demanded from his domestic life nothing but those comforts of a home dinner, of the hostess, of the bed, which she could give him, and, above all, that decency of external forms which were determined by public opinion. In everything else he sought merry enjoyment and decency, and he was thankful when he found them. Whenever he met with opposition and grumbling, he immediately withdrew to the separate world of his service, in which he hedged himself in and found his pleasure.

Iván Ilích was esteemed as a good official, and after three years he was made associate prosecuting attorney. His new duties, their importance, the possibility of sum-

moning to court and incarcerating any person, the publicity of the speeches, the success which Iván Ilích had in this matter, — all this attracted him more and more to the service.

There came a succession of children. His wife became more irritable and grumbled more and more, but his relations to domestic life, as worked out by him, made him almost impermeable to her irritability.

After seven years of serving in one city, Iván Ilích was transferred to another Government in the capacity of prosecuting attorney. They moved; they had little money, and his wife did not like the place to which they moved. Though his salary was larger than before, the living was more expensive; besides, two of the children died, and so the domestic life became even more disagreeable for Iván Ilích.

Praskóvya Fédorovna reproached her husband for all mishaps in this their new place of abode. The majority of the subjects of conversation between husband and wife, especially the education of the children, led to questions which recalled former quarrels, and quarrels were ready to burst forth at any moment. There remained only those rare periods of amorousness which came over the two, but did not last long. Those were islets where they anchored for awhile, but they soon set out again into the sea of hidden enmity, which found its expression in their mutual alienation. This alienation might have grieved Iván Ilích, if he had thought that this ought not to be so; but he now recognized this situation not only as normal, but even as the aim of his activity in the family. His aim consisted in freeing himself more and more from these unpleasantnesses and giving them the character of innocuousness and decency; and this he obtained by passing less and less time with his family, and when he was compelled to be with them, he tried to make his position secure by the presence of third parties.

But the chief thing was his service. The whole interest of life centred for him in the official world. This interest absorbed him. The consciousness of his power, of the possibility of ruining any man he wanted to ruin, his importance with his inferiors, even externally, upon entering court or meeting them elsewhere, his success before his superiors and his subordinates, and, above all, the mastery with which he conducted his cases, of which he was conscious, — all this gave him pleasure, and with his conversations with friends, and with dinners and whist, filled his life. Thus, in general, Iván Ilích's life continued to run as he thought that it ought to run, — agreeably and decently.

Thus he lived another seven years. His eldest daughter was now sixteen years old; another child had died, and there was left a boy, a gymnasiast, the subject of their contentions. Iván Ilích wanted to send him to a law school, but Praskóvya Fédorovna, to spite him, sent the boy to a gymnasium. The daughter studied at home and grew well, and the boy, too, studied not badly.

### III.

THUS Iván Ilích's life had run for seventeen years from the time of his marriage. He was now an old prosecuting attorney, who had declined several transfers in the expectation of a more desirable place, when suddenly there happened a disagreeable circumstance which completely upset the calm of his life. Iván Ilích was waiting for the place of presiding judge in a university city; but Góppe somehow got ahead of him, and received that place. Iván Ilích was annoyed at this, began to make reproaches, and quarrelled with him and with the nearer authorities; they grew cold to him, and at the next appointment he was again left out.

That happened in the year 1880. That year was the most difficult one in Iván Ilích's life. In that year it appeared that, on the one hand, the salary was not large enough to live on, and that, on the other, all had forgotten him, and that what in relation to him appeared to him as the greatest and most cruel injustice, to others appeared as an entirely common affair. Even his father did not consider it his duty to help him. He felt that all had abandoned him, considering his situation with thirty-five hundred roubles salary most normal and even fortunate. He alone knew that, with the consciousness of those cases of injustice which had been done him, and with the eternal nagging of his wife, and with the debts which he had begun to make, since he was living beyond his means, — he alone knew that his situation was far from being normal.



To economize, he took that summer a leave of absence and went with his wife to pass the summer in the country with Praskóvya Fédorovna's brother.

In the country without his service, Iván Ilích for the first time experienced not only tedium, but also intolerable despondency, and he decided that it was impossible to live in this manner and that it was necessary to take some decisive measures.

Iván Ilích passed a sleepless night, during which he walked up and down the terrace, and he decided to go to St. Petersburg, to bestir himself, and, in order to punish *them*, who had not appreciated him, to go over to another ministry.

On the next day he went to St. Petersburg, in spite of the dissuasions of his wife and his brother-in-law.

He went there with one thing in view, — to obtain a place which would give him a salary of five thousand a year. He no longer stuck to any ministry, political bias, or manner of activity. All he needed was a place, a place with five thousand, in the administration, in the banks, with the railways, in the institutions of Empress Mary, even in the custom-house, — but it had by all means to be five thousand, and he by all means to leave the ministry, where they did not know how to appreciate him.

This journey of Iván Ilích was crowned by remarkable, unexpected success. In Kursk F. S. Ilín, an acquaintance of his, entered the coach of the first class, and informed him of the contents of the latest despatch received by the governor of Kursk, that shortly a transposition would take place in the ministry: Iván Seménovich was to be appointed in Peter Ivánovich's place.

The proposed transposition had, in addition to its meaning for Russia, a special meaning for Iván Ilích, for, by bringing to the front Peter Petróvich and, apparently, his friend Zákhar Ivánovich, it was extremely favourable for



Iván Ilích. Zákhar Ivánovich was Iván Ilích's school-mate and friend.

In Moscow the news was confirmed. Upon arriving at St. Petersburg, Iván Ilích found Zákhar Ivánovich, from whom he received the promise of a certain place in his former ministry of justice.

A week later he telegraphed to his wife: "Zákhar Míller's place, with first report I receive appointment."

Thanks to this transposition of persons, Iván Ilích suddenly received an appointment in his former ministry, which advanced him two points above his comrades, and gave him a salary of five thousand, and thirty-five hundred for travelling expenses. His whole anger against his former enemies and against the whole ministry was forgotten, and he was quite happy.

Iván Ilích returned to the village merry and satisfied, as he had not been for a long time. Praskóvya Fédorovna herself was merry, and a truce was established between them. Iván Ilích told of how he had been honoured in St. Petersburg, how all those who were his enemies had been put to shame and now were fawning before him, how he was envied his position, and especially how much all loved him in St. Petersburg.

Praskóvya listened to it all, and looked as though she believed it all, and did not contradict him in anything; she only made plans for the new arrangement of life in the city to which they were going to move. Iván Ilích saw with delight that these plans were his plans, that they agreed with one another, and that his arrested life was once more receiving the real character of merry pleasantness and decency which was peculiar to it.

Iván Ilích came back for but a short time. On September the 10th he had to enter upon his new office, and, besides, he needed time to arrange matters in the new place, to transfer everything from the province, to purchase things, to order a lot more, — in short, to arrange matters

as they had been determined upon in his mind, and almost in precisely the same manner as had been decided also in Praskóvya Fédorovna's mind.

Now that everything had been arranged so successfully and he and his wife agreed in their aims, and besides lived so little together, they became more friendly with one another than they had been since the first years of their married life. Iván Ilích intended to take his family away at once, but the insistence of his sister and his brother-in-law, who suddenly became unusually amiable and familiarly interested in Iván Ilích and his family, had this effect, that Iván Ilích departed by himself.

Iván Ilích departed, and the happy mood which was produced by his success and the agreement with his wife, one intensifying the other, did not leave him all the time. He found charming quarters, precisely what husband and wife had been dreaming of together. The large, high-studded reception-rooms in the old style, the comfortable, magnificent cabinet, the rooms for his wife and his daughter, the class-room for his son,—everything was as if purposely intended for them; Iván Ilích himself attended to their appointments: he chose the wall-paper, bought more furniture, especially such as was old-fashioned, which gave the aspect of a *comme il faut* style and which he had re-covered, and everything grew and grew, and arrived at the ideal which he had formed for himself. When he had half arranged matters, his arrangement surpassed his expectations. He understood that *comme il faut*, elegant, and non-vulgar character which everything would assume when it was ready.

When he fell asleep, he imagined the parlour as it would be. As he looked at the drawing-room, which was not yet finished, he already saw the fireplace, the screen, the shelves, and those scattered chairs, those dishes and plates along the walls, and the bronzes, when they should all be set up in their proper places. He rejoiced at the thought

of how he would surprise Praskóvya and Lízanka, who also had good taste in such things. They were not expecting it at all. He was particularly fortunate in finding and purchasing some old things, which gave it a peculiarly noble aspect. In his letters he purposely represented matters worse than they were, in order to startle them the more. All this interested him so much that even his new service, though he liked it, interested him less than he had expected.

At the sessions he had minutes of absent-mindedness; he was wondering what borders to put on the curtains, whether to have them straight or gathered. He was so busy with this, that he frequently bothered with it himself, transposed the furniture, and himself hung the curtains in different places. One day he climbed a ladder in order to show the paper-hanger how he wanted the drapery hung; he made a misstep and fell, but, as he was a strong and agile man, he caught himself in time, merely striking his side against the window-frame knob. The blow hurt a little, but this soon passed away.

Iván Ilích felt himself particularly happy and well during this time. He wrote: "I feel that fifteen years have jumped off from me." He had intended to be through with it all in September, but it lasted until the middle of October. But it was superb, so not only he said, but also all those who saw it.

In reality it was the same as in the case of all not very wealthy men, who want to be like the rich, and so only resemble one another: there were stuffs, black wood, flowers, rugs, and bronzes, dark and burnished, everything which people of a certain class have in order to resemble all people of a certain class. And everything was so much like it in his house, that it was even impossible to direct one's attention to it, but to him it appeared as something quite special. When he met his family at the railway station and brought them home to his illuminated

and fixed-up apartments, and a lackey in a white necktie opened the door into an antechamber which was all adorned with flowers, and they later entered the drawing-room and the cabinet, and went into raptures from pleasure, — he was very happy, led them around everywhere, imbibed their praises and shone with joy. On that evening, when Praskóvya Fédorovna asked him at tea, among other things, how he had fallen, he laughed and impersonated to them how he flew down and frightened the paper-hanger.

“That’s what I am a gymnast for. Another man would have been killed, but I barely hit myself right here; when you touch it, it hurts, but it is all going away; it is simply a bump.”

And they began to live in their new quarters, in which, as is always the case when people have settled down, there was wanting just one room, and with their new means, to which, as always, only a little, some five hundred roubles, was wanting, and everything was very well. Especially well it was at first, when things were not yet all arranged, and it was necessary still to look after things, — now to buy, now to order, now to transpose, now to fix things. Though there was some disagreement between husband and wife, both were so much satisfied, and they had so much to do, that everything ended without any great quarrels. When there was nothing more to arrange, it became a little tedious and something was wanting, but they made new acquaintances, acquired new habits, and life was filled out.

Iván Ilích passed the morning in the court and returned for dinner, and at first his disposition was good, though it suffered somewhat from the apartments. Every spot on the table-cloth and on the upholstery, a torn cord of the curtain, irritated him. He had put so much labour into the arrangement of things, that every bit of destruction pained him. But, in general, Iván Ilích’s life went

on as according to his faith it had to run,—lightly, agreeably, and decently. He got up at nine, drank coffee, read the newspaper, then put on his undress uniform, and went to court.

Here he found the collar set in which he had to work: he immediately found his way into it. There were petitioners, inquiries at the chancery, the chancery itself, the sessions,—public and administrative sessions. In all this it was necessary to exclude everything raw and vital, which for ever impairs the regularity of the course of official affairs: it was necessary not to permit any relations with people outside of official ones, and the cause for such relations must be nothing but official, and the relations themselves must be nothing but official. For example, a man comes and wants to find out something. Iván Ilích, as a private citizen, can have no relations with such a man; but if there exists a relation with such a man, as to a member of the court, such a relation as can be expressed on paper with a heading,—within the limits of such relations Iván Ilích does everything, absolutely everything possible, and with this he observes the semblance of human, amicable relations, that is, politeness. The moment the official relation comes to an end, every other relation is also ended. This ability to separate the official side, without mixing it with real life, Iván Ilích possessed in the highest degree, and through long practice and talent he had worked it out to such a degree that at times he permitted himself, like an artist, as though in jest, to mix the human and the official relations. He took this liberty, because he felt himself able always, whenever it should be necessary, again to segregate what was official and reject what was human.

Things went with Iván Ilích not only easily, agreeably, and decently, but even artistically. During pauses he smoked, drank tea, and chatted a bit about politics, a little about general matters, a little about cards, and most of



all about appointments. And he returned home tired, but with the feeling of the artist who has finished with precision his part, one of the first violins in the orchestra.

At home the daughter and her mother were either out calling somewhere, or they had guests; the son was in the gymnasium, prepared his lessons with tutors, and studied well such things as are studied in a gymnasium. After dinner, if there were no guests, Iván Ilích at times read a book of which people were talking a great deal, and in the evening sat down to attend to business, that is, he read documents and looked into the laws, comparing depositions and finding corresponding statutes. This neither annoyed him, nor gave him pleasure. He felt ennui when it was possible to play vint; but when there was no vint, this was better than sitting alone or with his wife. His pleasures consisted in small dinners, to which he invited ladies and gentlemen who were distinguished so far as their worldly position was concerned, and in such pastime with them as would resemble the usual pastime of such people, just as his drawing-room resembled all other drawing-rooms.

One time they even had an evening party, and there was some dancing. Iván Ilích felt happy and everything was well, except that he had a great quarrel with his wife on account of the cake and confectionery: Praskóvya Fédorovna had her own plan, but Iván Ilích insisted that everything be purchased from an expensive confectioner, and bought a lot of cake, and the quarrel was due to the fact that the cake was left over, while the confectioner's bill amounted to forty-five roubles. The quarrel was great and disagreeable, so that Praskóvya Fédorovna said to him, "Fool, ninny!" He clutched his head and in his anger made some mention about divorce. But the evening itself was a merry one. The best society was present, and Iván Ilích danced with Princess Trufónov,

the sister of the one who was known through the founding of the society of "Carry away my grief."

The official joys were the joys of self-love; the social joys were the joys of vanity; but Iván Ilích's real joys were the joys of the game of vint. He confessed that after everything, after any joyless incidents in his life, it was a joy, which shone like a candle before the rest, to sit down with good players, not bellowing partners, to a game of vint, by all means in a four-handed game ("a five-handed game is annoying, though I pretend that I like it"), and to carry on a clever, serious game (when the cards come your way), then to eat supper and drink a glass of wine. Iván Ilích used to lie down to sleep after a game of vint in a very good frame of mind, especially if his winnings were small (large ones are disagreeable).

Thus they lived. Their society circle consisted of the best, and distinguished and young people called on them.

In their opinions of the circle of their acquaintances, husband, wife, and daughter were in complete agreement. Without having plotted on the subject, they all alike washed their hands clean and freed themselves from all kinds of friends and relatives, slatternly people, who flew at them gushingly in their drawing-room with the Japanese plates along the wall. Soon these slatternly friends stopped flying about, and the Golovíns had nothing but the very best society left. Young men paid court to Lízanka, and Petríshchev, the son of Dmítří Ivánovich Petríshchev, and the only heir to his fortune, as examining magistrate, began to pay attention to Lízanka, so that Iván Ilích even had a talk about this matter with Praskóvya Fédorovna, whether he had not better take them out driving on tróykas, or arrange a performance for them.

Thus they lived, and everything went on thus, without any change, and everything was well.



#### IV.

ALL were well. It was impossible to call ailment that of which Iván Ilích now and then said that he had a peculiar taste in his mouth and an uncomfortable feeling in the left side of his abdomen.

But it so happened that this discomfort kept growing and passing, not yet into a pain, but into the consciousness of a constant weight in his side and into ill humour. This ill humour, growing and growing all the time, began to spoil the pleasure of the light and decent life which had established itself in the family of the Golovíns. Man and wife began to quarrel more and more often, and soon there disappeared the ease and pleasure, and with difficulty decency alone was maintained. The scenes became more frequent again. Again there were left some islets, but only a few of these, on which husband and wife could meet without any explosion. Praskóvya Fédorovna now said not without reason that her husband was hard to get along with. With her usual habit of exaggerating, she said that he had always had such a terrible character that one had to have her goodness to have stood him for twenty years. It is true, the quarrels now began with him. It was he who began to find fault, always immediately before dinner, and frequently just as he was beginning to eat, during his soup. Now he remarked that some dish was chipped, or the food was not just right, or his son had put his elbow on the table, or there was something wrong with his daughter's hairdressing. For everything he blamed Praskóvya Fédorovna.

Praskóvya Fédorovna at first retorted and told him

disagreeable things, but he once or twice flew into such a rage during the dinner that she understood that this was a morbid condition, which was provoked in him by the partaking of the food, and she curbed herself: she no longer retorted, but only hastened to eat her dinner. Praskóvya Fédorovna regarded her humility as a great desert of hers. Having made up her mind that her husband had a terrible character, and had been the misfortune of her life, she began to pity herself, and the more she pitied herself, the more did she hate her husband. She began to wish that he would die, but she could not wish this, because then there would be no salary. And this irritated her still more against him. She considered herself terribly unfortunate even because his very death could not save her, and she was irritated and concealed her irritation, and this concealed irritation increased her irritation.

After a scene, in which Iván Ilích was particularly unjust, and after which he during the explanation said that he was indeed irritable, but that this was due to his disease, she said to him that if he was ill, he had to undergo a cure, and so demanded of him that he should consult a famous physician.

He went to see him. Everything was as he had expected; everything was done as such things always are. The expectancy, and the assumed importance of the doctor, which was familiar to him and which he knew in himself in the court, and the tapping, and the auscultation, and the questions which demanded previously determined and apparently useless answers, and the significant aspect which seemed to say, "Just submit to us, and we shall arrange everything; we know indubitably how to arrange it all, in the same fashion for any man you please." Everything was precisely as in the court. Just as he assumed a certain mien in respect to the defendants, so the famous doctor assumed the same mien.

The doctor said, "So and so shows that inside of you there is so and so ; but if that is not confirmed by the investigation of so and so, we shall have to assume so and so. If we assume so and so, then —" and so forth. Iván Ilích was interested in but one question, and that was, whether his situation was dangerous, or not. But the doctor ignored this irrelevant question. From the doctor's standpoint, this question was idle and not subject to consideration ; there existed only a weighing of probabilities, — between a floating kidney, a chronic catarrh, and the disease of the cæcum. This dispute the doctor decided in the presence of Iván Ilích in a brilliant manner in favour of the cæcum, with the proviso that the investigation of the urine might give new symptoms, and then the case would be revised. All that was precisely what Iván Ilích had a thousand times done in just as brilliant a manner in the case of defendants. The doctor made his résumé in just as brilliant a manner, and looked with a triumphant and merry glance over his glasses at the defendant. From the doctor's résumé Iván Ilích drew the conclusion that things were bad, and that it was a matter of indifference to him, the doctor, and, for all that, to all people, but bad for himself. This conclusion morbidly affected Iván Ilích, provoking in him a feeling of great pity for himself and of great anger against this doctor who was indifferent to such an important question.

But he did not say anything ; he only got up, put the money down on the table, and said, sighing, "We sick people no doubt frequently put irrelevant questions to you. Is this, in general, a dangerous disease, or not?"

The doctor cast a stern glance at him with one eye, above his glasses, as though saying, "Defendant, if you do not remain within the limits of the questions put to you, I shall be obliged to order your removal from the court-room."

"I have already told you what I consider necessary

and proper," said the doctor. "Further things will be disclosed in the investigation."

And the doctor made a bow.

Iván Ilích went out slowly, gloomily seated himself in the sleigh, and drove home. All the way he continued analyzing everything which the doctor had said, trying to translate all those mixed, obscure scientific terms into simple language, and to read in them an answer to the question, "Am I in bad shape, in very bad shape, or is it still all right?" And it seemed to him that the meaning of everything said by the doctor was that he was in bad shape. Everything in the streets appeared sad to Iván Ilích. The drivers were sad, the houses were sad, the passers-by, the shops were sad. But this pain, this dull, grinding pain, which did not leave him for a minute, seemed, in connection with the doctor's obscure words, to receive another, a more serious meaning. Iván Ilích now watched it with another, a heavy feeling.

He came home and began to tell his wife about it. His wife listened to him, but in the middle of the conversation his daughter entered, with a hat on her head; she was getting ready to drive out with her mother. She made an effort to sit down and listen to all that tiresome talk, but did not hold out, and her mother, too, did not stop to hear the end of it.

"Well, I am very glad," said his wife. "So now, be sure and take the medicine regularly. Give me the recipe, — I will send Gerásim to the apothecary's."

And she went out to get dressed.

He did not dare to draw breath while she was in the room, but when she left, he heaved a deep sigh.

"Well," he said, "maybe it is, indeed, all right yet."

He began to take medicine, to carry out the doctor's prescriptions, which were changed in consequence of the urine investigation. But here it somehow happened that in this investigation and in what was to follow after it

things became mixed up. It was impossible for him to make his way to the doctor himself, and it turned out that things were done differently from what the doctor had ordered. Either the doctor had forgotten something or told an untruth, or was hiding something from him.

But Iván Ilích none the less began punctually to carry out the doctor's instructions, and at first found some consolation in performing this duty.

Iván Ilích's chief occupation, since his visit to the doctor, became a punctual execution of the doctor's instructions as regards hygiene and the taking of medicine and the watching of his disease and of all the functions of his organism. People's diseases and health became his chief interest. When they spoke in his presence of sick people, of such as had died or were recuperating, especially of a disease which resembled his own, he, trying to conceal his agitation, listened, inquired, and made deductions as to his own disease.

The pain did not subside; but Iván Ilích made efforts over himself, in order to make himself believe that he was feeling better. He was able to deceive himself so long as nothing agitated him. But the moment he had some unpleasantness with his wife, some failure in his service, bad cards in vint, he immediately felt the full force of his disease. Formerly he had borne these failures, hoping that he would mend what was bad, would struggle and gain some success, would get a full hand; but now every failure sapped his strength, and cast him into despair. He said to himself: "I had just begun to mend, and the medicine had begun to act, when this accursed misfortune or unpleasantness befell me —" And he was furious at the misfortune or at the people who caused him an unpleasantness and were killing him, and he felt that this anger was killing him, but was unable to keep from it. It would seem that it must have become clear to him that this embitterment against circumstances and



people only intensified his disease, and that, therefore, he ought to pay no attention to unpleasant incidents; but he made the very contrary reflection: he said that he needed calm, and watched everything which impaired his calm, and became irritable with every least impairment. What made his condition worse was his reading books on medicine and consulting doctors. His health declined so evenly that he was able to deceive himself when he compared one day with another, — there was little difference. But when he consulted doctors, it seemed to him that he was growing worse, and very rapidly at that; but, in spite of that, he constantly consulted doctors.

This month he called on another celebrity: the other celebrity told him almost the same as the first celebrity, but put the questions differently. The consultation with this celebrity only increased Iván Ilích's doubt and fear. The friend of a friend of his, a very good doctor, determined the disease in a still different manner, and, although he promised a cure, he with his questions and assumptions still more confused Iván Ilích and intensified his doubts. A homœopathist determined the disease in a still different way and gave him some medicine, and he took it for a week, secretly from all. But at the end of the week he felt no relief and lost his confidence in all former treatments and in the present one, too, and so became still more dejected. At one time a lady acquaintance told him of a cure by means of holy images. Iván Ilích caught himself listening attentively and believing the actuality of the fact. This incident frightened him.

"Is it possible I have mentally grown so feeble?" he said to himself. "Nonsense! It's all bosh! I must not submit to my small faith, but, selecting one physician, must strictly adhere to his treatment. I shall do so. It's all over with that. I will not think, and will stick to the one treatment until summer. We shall know what to do after that. Now there is an end to wavering!"

It was easy to say all that, but impossible to execute it. The pain in his side was still annoying and seemed to be increasing and growing more constant; the taste in his mouth grew more and more queer,—he thought a disgusting smell came from his mouth,—and his appetite and his strength grew weaker and weaker. It was impossible for him to deceive himself: something terrible, new, and more significant than anything that had ever taken place in his life was now going on in him. He alone knew of it, and all those who surrounded him did not understand it, or did not wish to understand it, and thought that everything in the world was going on as before. That tormented him more than anything. His home folk, especially his wife and his daughter, who were in the very heat of calls, he saw, did not understand a thing about it and were annoyed because he was so cheerless and so exacting, as though it were his fault. Though they tried to conceal this, he saw that he was an obstacle to them, but that his wife had worked out for herself a certain relation to his disease and held on to it independently of what he said and did. This relation was like this:

“You know,” she would say to her friends, “Iván Ilích, like all good people, is unable strictly to take the prescribed cure. To-day he will take the drops and eat what he is ordered to eat, and will go to bed early; to-morrow, if I do not watch him, he will forget to take the medicine, will eat some sturgeon (and he is not allowed to eat that), and will sit up playing vint until one o’clock.

“‘When did I do it?’ Iván Ilích will say in anger. ‘Just this once at Peter Ivánovich’s.’

“‘And yesterday at Shébek’s.’

“‘It makes no difference, I cannot sleep from pain anyway.’

“‘Whether from pain or from anything else, you will never get well this way, and you only torment us.’”



Praskóvya Fédorovna's external relation to her husband's ailment, which she expressed to him as much as to others, was this, that Iván Ilích had himself to blame for this ailment, and that this whole ailment was a new annoyance which he was causing his wife. Iván Ilích felt that that came involuntarily from her, but that did not make it any easier for him.

In the court Iván Ilích observed, or thought that he observed, the same strange relation to himself: now it seemed to him that people peeped at him as at a man who was soon to make a place vacant; now his friends began in a jesting manner to tease him on account of his suspiciousness, as though the fact that something terrible and horrible, something unheard-of, which was taking place in him and gnawing at him and drawing him somewhere, were a most agreeable subject for jests. He was particularly irritated by Schwarz, who with his playfulness, vivacity, and *comme il faut* ways reminded him of what he had been ten years before.

Friends come to have a game, and they sit down at the table. The cards are dealt; the new cards are separated, and the diamonds are placed with the diamonds, — seven of them. The partner says, "Without trumps," and supports two diamonds. What else should one wish? It ought to be jolly and lively, — a clean sweep. And suddenly Iván Ilích feels such a gnawing pain, such a bad taste in his mouth, and it feels so queer to him to be able with all that to find any pleasure in a clean sweep.

He looks at Mikhaíl Mikháylovich, his partner, as he with the hand of a sanguine man strikes the table and politely and condescendingly refrains from sweeping in the stakes and moves them up to Iván Ilích, in order to give him the pleasure of taking them in, without going to much trouble or stretching his hand far.

"Does he really think that I am so feeble that I cannot stretch out my hand?" thinks Iván Ilích, and he

forgets what is trumps, and unnecessarily trumps his own cards, and loses the clean sweep by three points, and, what is more terrible still, he sees Mikhaíl Mikháylovich suffering, and that makes no difference to him. And it is terrible for him to think that it makes no difference to him.

All see that it is hard for him, and they say to him: "We can stop, if you are tired. You had better rest."

Rest? No, he is not in the least tired, — he will finish the rubber. All are sad and silent. Iván Ilích feels that it is he who has cast this gloom over them, and he cannot dispel it. They eat supper and leave, and Iván Ilích is left alone with the consciousness that his life is poisoned for him and poisons others, and that this poison does not weaken him, but more and more penetrates all his being.

And it was with this consciousness, in addition to the physical pain, and with terror, that he had to lie down in his bed, and often be unable from pain to sleep the greater part of the night. In the morning he had to get up again, go to the court, or, if not in court, stay at home all the twenty-four hours of the day, each of which was a torment. And he had to live by himself on the edge of perdition, without a single man to understand or pity him.

## V.

THUS passed a month, and two months. Before New Year his brother-in-law arrived in the city, and stopped at their house. Iván Ilích was at court. Praskóvya Fédorovna was out shopping. Upon entering his cabinet, Iván Ilích found there his brother-in-law, a healthy sanguine man, who was himself unpacking his satchel. Upon hearing Iván Ilích's steps, he raised his head and for a second looked at him in silence. This glance disclosed everything to Iván Ilích. The brother-in-law opened his mouth to exclaim something in amazement, but held himself back. This motion confirmed everything.

"Well, have I changed?"

"Yes — there is a change."

And no matter how much Iván Ilích afterward led his brother-in-law up to talk about his appearance, his brother-in-law kept quiet about it. Praskóvya Fédorovna came home, and the brother-in-law went to see her. Iván Ilích locked the door and began to look at himself in the mirror, at first straight, and then from one side. He took the photograph of himself and his wife, and compared it with what he saw in the mirror. The change was tremendous. Then he bared his arms as high as the elbow; he looked at them, pulled down the sleeves, sat down on an ottoman, and grew darker than night.

"I must not, I must not," he said to himself. He went up to the table, picked up a law case, and began to read it, but was unable to do so. He opened the door and went into the parlour. The door to the drawing-room was closed. He went up to it on tiptoe, and began to listen.

"No, you exaggerate it," said Praskóvya Fédorovna.

"Exaggerate? No. You do not see it, he is a dead man,—look into his eyes. There is no light in them. What is the matter with him?"

"Nobody knows. Nikoláev" (that was the second doctor) "said something, but I do not know what. Leshchetitski" (that was the famous doctor) "said, on the contrary —"

Iván Ilích walked away and went to his room; he lay down and began to think: "The kidney, a floating kidney." He recalled everything which the doctors had told him about how it had torn itself away and was floating around. He tried with an effort of the imagination to catch this kidney, and to arrest and fasten it. So little was needed for that, he thought. "No, I will call on Peter Ivánovich before I do anything else." (This was that friend whose friend was a doctor.) He rang the bell, ordered the horse to be hitched up, and got himself ready to go.

"Whither are you going, *Jean*?" asked his wife, with a peculiarly sad and strangely kind expression.

This strangely kind expression made him furious. He cast a gloomy glance at her.

"I have some business with Peter Ivánovich."

He drove to the house of his friend, who had a friend who was a doctor. With him he drove to the doctor. He found him at home, and conversed with him for a long time.

By analyzing anatomically and physiologically the details of what, according to the doctor's opinion, was going on in him, he understood it all.

There was a thing, just a little thing, in his blind gut. All this might change for the better. Strengthen the energy of one organ, weaken the activity of another, there will take place a suction, and all will be well. He was a little too late for dinner. He dined and conversed merrily,

but could not for a long time go back to his room to attend to his business. Finally he went to his cabinet, and immediately sat down to work. He read some cases and worked, but the consciousness of the fact that he had a reserved, important, confidential matter, with which he would busy himself after he was through, did not leave him. When he was through with work he recalled that this confidential matter was his thoughts about the blind gut. But he did not abandon himself to them: he went to the drawing-room for tea.

There were guests there, and they talked, and played the piano, and sang; there was also the investigating magistrate, his daughter's intended. Iván Ilích, according to Praskóvya Féodorovna's remark, passed a jollier evening than ever; but he did not for a moment forget the fact that he had some reserved, important thoughts about the blind gut.

At eleven o'clock he excused himself, and went to his room. Ever since the beginning of his disease he had slept by himself, in a small room near his cabinet. He went there, undressed himself, and took up a novel by Zola, but did not read it,—he was thinking. In his imagination took place the desired improvement in his blind gut. There was a suction and a secretion, and the regular activity was reëstablished.

"Yes, that is all correct," he said to himself. "All one has to do is to come to Nature's aid."

He thought of his medicine. He raised himself up, took the medicine, and lay down on his back, watching the beneficial effect of the medicine and the destruction of his pain by it.

"Take it regularly and avoid deleterious influences, that is all; I am beginning to feel a little better, much better."

He began to feel his side, but it did not pain to the touch.

"Yes, I do not feel it, — really it is much better now."

He put out the light, and lay down on his side. The blind gut is improving, and being sucked in. Suddenly he experienced his old, dull, gnawing pain, — it was stubborn, calm, and serious. In the mouth was the same familiar, abominable taste. His heart was pinched, his head was dizzy.

"My God, my God!" he muttered, "again and again, and it will never stop."

Suddenly the matter presented itself to him from an entirely different side.

"The blind gut, the kidney!" he said to himself. "It is not a question of the blind gut, nor of the kidney, but of life and — death. Yes, there was life, and it is going away and away, and I cannot retain it. Yes. Why should I deceive myself? Is it not evident to all outside of me that I am dying? The question is only in the number of weeks and days — perhaps now. There was light, but now it is darkness. I was here until now, but now I am going thither! Whither?"

He was chilled, and his breath stopped. He heard only the beats of his heart.

"I shall be no longer, so what will there be? There will be nothing. But where shall I be, when I am no longer? Can it be death? No, I will not die."

He leaped up and wanted to light a candle; he groped about with trembling hands, dropped the candle with the candlestick on the floor, and again fell back on the pillow.

"What's the use? It makes no difference," he said to himself, looking with open eyes into the darkness. "Death, yes, death. And not one of them knows, or wants to know, and they have no pity. They are playing." (He was hearing beyond the door the peal of voices and of a *ritornelle*.) "It makes no difference to them, but they, too, will die. Foolishness! First I, and they



after me; they will come to the same. And they are making merry. Beasts!"

Malice was choking him. He felt painfully and intolerably oppressed. It could not be that all should be fated to experience this terrible fear. He got up.

"Something is not quite right; I must calm myself, I must consider everything from the beginning."

And he began to consider.

"Yes, the beginning of the disease. I struck my side, and I was all the time the same, to-day and to-morrow, — I had a little pain, then more, then the doctors, then a gnawing pain, then despair, again the doctors; and I kept coming nearer and nearer to the abyss. There is less strength. Nearer and nearer. And I wore myself out, — I have no light in my eyes. And there is death, and I am thinking all the time of the blind gut. I am thinking of mending the gut, but this is death. Is it really death?"

Again he was assailed by terror: he breathed heavily, and bent over, trying to find a match, and pressed with his elbow against the foot-rest. The foot-rest was in his way and caused him pain, so he grew angry at it and in his anger pressed harder against it and threw it down. In his despair he lost his breath and threw himself down on his back, expecting death to come at once.

At this time the guests were departing. Praskóvya Féodorovna was seeing them off. She heard something fall, and entered the room.

"What is the matter with you?"

"Nothing. I dropped it accidentally."

She went out and brought a candle. He was lying down, breathing heavily and fast, like a man who had run a verst, and looked at her with an arrested glance.

"What is the matter with you, *Jean*?"

"Noth—ing. I — dropped — it."

"What is the use of telling her? She will not under-

stand it," he thought. She did not understand it indeed. She lifted the foot-rest, lighted a candle for him, and hurried away. She had to see a guest off.

When she came back he was still lying on his back, looking at the ceiling.

"How are you? Are you feeling worse?"

"Yes."

She shook her head, and sat awhile.

"Do you know, *Jean*? I think it would be well to send for Leshchetitski."

This meant that she wanted to send for the famous doctor, and not to spare any expense. He smiled a sarcastic smile, and said, "No." She sat awhile, and then went up to him and kissed his brow.

He hated her with all the strength of his soul just as she was kissing him, and he made an effort over himself not to push her back.

"Good night. God will grant you to fall asleep."

"Yes."

## VI.

IVÁN ILÍCH saw that he was dying, but he was not only not used to this, but simply did not understand and was absolutely unable to understand it.

That example of a syllogism which he had learned from Kiesewetter's logic, "Caius is a man, men are mortal, consequently Caius is mortal," had all his life seemed true to him only in regard to Caius, but by no means to him. That was Caius the man, man in general, and that was quite true; but he was not Caius, and not man in general; he had always been an entirely, entirely different being from all the rest; he had been Ványa with his mother, with his father, Mitya, and Volodya; with his toys, the coachman, and the nurse; then with Kátenka, with all the joys, sorrows, and delights of childhood, boyhood, youth. Had there ever existed for Caius that odour of the striped leather ball, which Ványa had been so fond of? Had Caius kissed his mother's hand in the same way, and had the silk of the folds of his mother's dress rustled in the same way for Caius? Had he been as riotous about patties at the Law School? Had Caius been in love like him? Had Caius been able to conduct a session like him?

"Caius is indeed mortal, and it is proper for him to die, but for me, Ványa, Iván Ilích, with all my feelings and thoughts, for me it is an entirely different matter. It cannot be proper for me to die. That would be too terrible."

That was the way he felt about it.

"If I were to die like Caius, I should know it, and an inner voice would tell me so, but nothing similar has been the case with me, and I and all my friends understood that it is not all the same as with Caius. But now it is like this!" he said to himself. "It is impossible! It cannot be, but it is so. How is this? How is this to be comprehended?"

And he was unable to understand, and tried to dispel this thought as being false, irregular, and morbid, and to substitute for it other, regular, healthy thoughts. But this thought, — not merely thought, but, as it were, reality, — came back and stood before him.

And he invoked in the place of this thought other thoughts in rotation, in the hope of finding a support in them. He tried to return to former trains of thought, which heretofore had veiled the thought of death from him. But, strange to say, what formerly had veiled, concealed, and destroyed the consciousness of death, now could no longer produce this effect. Of late Iván Ilích passed the greater part of his time in these endeavours to reëstablish his former trains of feeling, which had veiled death from him.

He said to himself, "I will busy myself with my service, for have I not lived by it heretofore?" and he went to court, dispelling all doubts from himself; he entered into conversations with his associates, and seated himself in his customary manner, casting a distracted, pensive glance upon the crowd, and leaning with both his emaciated hands on the rests of the oak chair, leaning over to an associate, as on former occasions, moving up the case, and whispering, and then, suddenly casting an upward glance and seating himself straight, he pronounced the customary words and began the case. But suddenly, in the middle, the pain in his side, paying no attention to the period of the development of the case, began its own gnawing work. Iván Ilích listened to it and dispelled

the thought of it, but it continued its work and came and stationed itself right in front of him and looked at him, and he was dazed, and the fire went out in his eyes, and he began to ask himself again, "Is it possible *it* alone is true?" And his associates and his men under him saw in surprise and sorrow that he, such a brilliant and shrewd judge, was getting mixed and making blunders. He shook himself, tried to come back to his senses, and somehow managed to bring the session to a close, and returned home with the sad consciousness that his judicial work could not, as it had done of old, conceal from him what he wished to be concealed, and that by means of his judicial work he could not be freed from *it*. And, what was worst of all, was this, that *it* drew him toward itself, not that he might be able to do something, but only that he might look at it, straight into its eyes, — that he might look at it and, without doing anything, might suffer unutterably.

And, while trying to escape this state, Iván Ilích sought consolation and other shields, and the other shields appeared and for a short time seemed to save him, but very soon they were again, not destroyed, but made transparent, as though *it* penetrated through everything, and nothing could shroud *it*.

During this last period he entered the drawing-room which he himself had furnished, — that drawing-room where he had fallen, for which he, — as he thought with sarcasm and ridicule, — for the arrangement of which he had sacrificed his life, for he knew that his disease had begun with that hurt; he entered and saw that there was a nick in the table. He looked for the cause of it, and found it in the bronze adornment of the album which was bent at the edge. He took the album, an expensive one, — he had made it himself with love, — and was annoyed at the carelessness of his daughter and her friends, — here there was a tear, and there the photographs were turned bottom

side up. He brought it all carefully back into shape and bent the adornment back again.

Then occurred to him the thought of transplanting all this *établissement* with the albums to another corner, near the flowers. He called up a lackey; either his daughter or his wife came to his rescue: they did not agree and contradicted him,—he quarrelled and grew angry; but everything was good, for he did not think of it,—*it* was not to be seen.

But just then his wife said, as he moved the things, “Let the servants do it, you will only hurt yourself,” and suddenly *it* flashed above the screen, and he saw *it*. *It* flashed by, and he still hopes that *it* will pass, but he involuntarily listens to one side,—*it* is still seated there and still causing him the same gnawing pain, and he can no longer forget, and *it* looks at him quite clearly from behind the flowers. What is this all for?

“And it is true that I lost my life on this curtain, as though in the storming of a fortress. Is it really so? How terrible and how stupid! It cannot be! It cannot be, but it is so.”

He went into his cabinet, and lay down there, and was again left all alone with *it*,—face to face with *it*,—and there was nothing he could do with *it*. All he had to do was to look at it and grow cold.



## VII.

How it all happened in the third month of Iván Ilích's disease is hard to tell, because it all happened imperceptibly step by step, but what happened was that his wife, and his son, and the servants, and his acquaintances, and the doctors, and, above all else, he himself knew that the whole interest in him consisted for others in nothing but the question how soon he would vacate the place, would free the living from the embarrassment produced by his presence, and would himself be freed from his sufferings.

He slept less and less: he was given opium, and they began to inject morphine into him. But this did not make it easier for him. The dull dejection which he experienced in his half-sleeping state at first gave him relief as something new, but later it grew to be the same, and even more agonizing, than the sharp pain.

They prepared particular kinds of food for him according to the doctor's prescriptions; but these dishes tasted to him more and more insipid, and more and more abominable.

Special appliances, too, were used for his evacuations, and every time this was a torture to him, — a torture on account of the impurity, the indecency, and the smell, and from the consciousness that another person had to take part in it.

But in this most disagreeable matter Iván Ilích found his consolation. The peasant of the buffet, Gerásim, always came to carry out his vessel. Now Gerásim was a clean, fresh young peasant, who had improved much on his

city food. He was always merry and precise. At first the sign of this cleanly man, who was dressed in Russian fashion and did this detestable work, embarrassed Iván Ilích.

One time, upon getting up from the vessel, and being unable to lift up his trousers, he dropped down into a soft chair and looked in terror at his bared, impotent thighs with their sharply defined muscles.

Gerásim, in heavy boots, spreading about him the agreeable odour of tar from his boots and of the freshness of the winter air, stepped into the room with heavy tread. He wore a clean hempen apron and a clean chintz shirt, the sleeves of which were rolled up on his bare, strong, youthful arms, and without looking at Iván Ilích, and apparently repressing the joy of life which shone upon his face, in order not to offend the patient, he walked over to the vessel.

"Gerásim," Iván Ilích said, in a feeble voice.

Gerásim trembled, apparently in fear of having done something wrong, and with a rapid motion turned to the patient his fresh, kindly, simple, youthful face, which was just beginning to be covered with a beard.

"What do you wish?"

"I suppose this is unpleasant for you. Excuse me. I cannot help it."

"Not at all, sir." And Gerásim flashed his eyes and displayed his youthful, white teeth. "Why should you trouble yourself? You are sick."

And with his strong, agile hands he did his usual work, and walked out, stepping lightly. Five minutes later he returned, stepping as lightly as before.

Iván Ilích was sitting in the chair in the same posture.

"Gerásim," he said, when Gerásim had put down the vessel, which had been washed clean, "please, come here and help me."

Gerásim went up to him.

"Lift me up. It is hard for me to do it all alone, and I have sent Dmítri away."

Gerásim went up to him: with his strong arms he embraced him as lightly as he stepped, raised him skilfully and softly, held him up, with one hand pulled up his trousers, and wanted to put him down again in the chair. But Iván Ilích asked to be taken to the divan. Gerásim without an effort, and as though without pressing against him, took him, almost carried him, to the divan, and seated him on it.

"Thank you. How skilfully and well you do everything."

Gerásim smiled again, and was on the point of leaving. But Iván Ilích felt so well with him that he did not want to dismiss him.

"Be so kind as to push that chair up to me. No, that, — under my feet. I feel more at ease when my legs are raised."

Gerásim brought him the chair, which he put down evenly on the floor without making a noise with it, and raised Iván Ilích's feet on the chair. It seemed to Iván Ilích that he felt more at ease while Gerásim was raising up his legs.

"I feel more at ease when my legs are higher," said Iván Ilích. "Put that pillow under me."

Gerásim did so. He raised the legs and put the pillow down. Again Iván Ilích felt better while Gerásim was holding his legs. When Gerásim put them down, he thought he felt worse.

"Gerásim," he said to him, "are you busy now?"

"Not at all, sir," said Gerásim, who had learned from city folk how to talk to gentlemen.

"What else have you to do?"

"What else have I to do? I have done everything, and have only to chop some wood for to-morrow."

"If so, hold up my legs a little higher, — can you do it?"

"Why not? I can."

Gerásim raised his legs higher. And it seemed to Iván Ilích that in this position he did not feel any pain at all.

"And how about the wood?"

"Do not trouble yourself. We shall get time for it."

Iván Ilích ordered Gerásim to sit down and hold his legs, and entered into a conversation with him. And, strange to say, it seemed to him that he felt better so long as Gerásim was holding his legs.

From that time on Iván Ilích began to call in Gerásim, and made Gerásim keep his legs on his shoulders, and was fond of talking with him. Gerásim did this lightly, gladly, simply, and with a goodness which affected Iván Ilích. Health, strength, vivacity in all other people offended Iván Ilích; but Gerásim's strength and vivacity did not sadden him, — it soothed him.

Iván Ilích's chief suffering was from a lie. This lie, for some reason accepted by all, was this, that he was only sick and not dying, and that he needed but to be calm and be cured, and then all would go well. He knew full well that, no matter what they might do, nothing would come of it but still more agonizing suffering and death. And he was tormented by this lie and by this, that they would not confess what all, and he, too, knew, but insisted on lying about him in this terrible situation, and wanted and compelled him to take part in this lie. The lie, the lie, this lie which was perpetrated on him on the day previous to his death and which was to reduce this terrible, solemn act of his death to the level of all their visits, curtains, sturgeon at dinner, was dreadfully painful for Iván Ilích. And, strange to say, often, while they were perpetrating their jests on him, he was within a hair's breadth of shouting out to them, "Stop lying! You know,

and I, too, know that I am dying, — so stop at least your lying.” But he had never the courage to do it.

The horrible, terrible act of his dying, he saw, was by all those who surrounded him reduced to the level of an accidental unpleasantness and partly to that of an indecency (something the way they treat a man who, upon entering a drawing-room, spreads a bad odour), through that very “decency” which he had been serving all his life; he saw that no one would pity him, because no one wanted even to understand his position. Gerásim was the only one who understood this position and pitied him. And so Iván Ilích never felt happy except when he was with Gerásim. He felt well when Gerásim, frequently whole nights at a stretch, held his legs and would not go to bed, saying, “Please not to trouble yourself, Iván Ilích, I shall get enough sleep yet;” or when he, passing over to “thou,” suddenly added, “If thou wert not a sick man it would be different, but as it is, why should I not serve thee?”

Gerásim was the only one who did not lie; everything proved that he alone understood what the matter was, and did not consider it necessary to conceal it, but simply pitied his emaciated, feeble master. Once, when Iván Ilích sent him away, he went so far as to say:

“We shall all of us die. Why should we not trouble ourselves?” with which he meant to say that he did not find his labour annoying, for the reason that he was doing it for a dying man, and that he hoped that in the proper time some one would do the same for him.

Besides this lie, or in consequence of it, Iván Ilích was most annoyed by this, that no one pitied him the way he wanted to be pitied; at certain moments, after long sufferings, Iván Ilích wanted most of all, however much he was ashamed to acknowledge the fact, that some one should pity him like a sick child. He wanted to be petted, kissed, and fondled, as they pet and console children.

He knew that he was an important member of the court and that his beard was streaked gray, and that, therefore, that was impossible; but he none the less desired it. In his relations with Gerásim there was something resembling it, and so his relations with Gerásim gave him consolation.

Iván Ilích feels like crying, and wants to be petted and cried over; and there comes his associate, member Shébek, and, instead of crying and being petted, Iván Ilích assumes a serious, stern, pensive aspect, and from inertia expresses his opinion on the decree of the court of cassation, and stubbornly sticks to his view. This lie all around him and in himself more than anything else poisoned the last days of Iván Ilích's life.



## VIII.

It was morning. It was morning, because Gerásim went away, and Peter the lackey came in his place: he put out the candles, drew aside one curtain, and began softly to fix up the room. Whether it was morning or evening, Friday or Sunday, did not make the slightest difference, — it was all the same: the gnawing, agonizing pain, which did not subside for a minute; the consciousness of the hopelessly receding, but not yet receded life; the same impending, terrible, hateful death, which alone was reality, and still the same lie. Where could there be here days, weeks, and hours of the day?

“Do you command me to bring you tea?”

“His order demands that gentlemen should drink tea in the morning,” he thought, but he said only:

“No.”

“Do you not wish to go over to the divan?”

“He has to tidy up the room, and I am in his way, — I am an impurity, a nuisance,” he thought, and all he said was:

“No, leave me.”

The lackey hustled a little while. Iván Ilích extended his hand. Peter came up, ready to serve him.

“What do you wish?”

“The watch.”

Peter got the watch which was lying under Iván Ilích's hand, and gave it to him.

“Half-past eight. Have they not got up yet?”

“Not yet, sir. Vasíli Ivánovich” (that was his son) “has gone to the gymnasium, and Praskóvya Féodorovna

has commanded that she be wakened, if you should ask for her. Do you command me?"

"No, don't."

"Maybe I had better try some tea?" he thought.

"Yes, tea. Bring me tea."

Peter started to go out. Iván Ilích felt terribly at being alone.

"How can I keep him? Yes, the medicine."

"Peter, give me the medicine."

"Why not? Maybe the medicine will help me yet."

He took a spoonful and swallowed it.

"No, it will not help me. It is all nonsense and a deception," he decided, the moment he had the familiar, detestable, hopeless taste in his mouth. "No, I can no longer believe. But the pain, the pain, what is it for? If it would only stop for just a minute."

And he sobbed. Peter came back.

"No, go. Bring me some tea."

Peter went away. When Iván Ilích was left alone, he groaned, not so much from pain, no matter how terrible it was, as from despondency. "Always the same and the same, all these endless days and nights. If it would only come at once. What at once? Death, darkness. No, no. Anything is better than death!"

When Peter came back with the tea on a tray, Iván Ilích for a long time looked distractedly at him, being unable to make out who he was, or what he wanted. Peter was confounded by this look. When Peter looked confounded, Iván Ilích came to his senses.

"Yes," he said, "the tea; all right, put it down. Only help me to get washed, and let me have a clean shirt."

And Iván Ilích got up to wash himself. Stopping occasionally, he washed his hands and face, cleaned his teeth, began to comb his hair, and looked into the mirror. He felt terribly, especially so, because his hair lay flat over his pale brow.

As his shirt was being changed, he knew that he would feel more terribly still if he looked at his body, and so he did not look at himself. But all was ended. He put on his morning-gown, covered himself with a shawl, and sat down in a chair to his tea. For a minute he felt himself refreshed, but the moment he began to drink the tea there was again the same taste, and the same pain. He with difficulty finished his glass and lay down, stretching his legs. He lay down, and dismissed Peter.

Again the same. Now a drop of hope would sparkle, and now a sea of despair would be agitated, and all the time the pain, and the pain, and the despondency, and again the same and the same. He felt terribly despondent by himself and wanted to call some one in, but he knew in advance that in the presence of others it would be worse still.

"If I just had some morphine again, — I should forget. I will tell him, the doctor, to think out something else. It cannot go on this way, it cannot."

Thus an hour, two hours pass. But now there is the bell in the antechamber. Perhaps the doctor. Indeed, it is the doctor, fresh, vivacious, fat, jolly, with an expression which seems to say, "Now there you are all frightened, but we will fix it all in a minute." The doctor knows that this expression is of no use here, but he has put it on once for all and cannot take it off, like a man who in the morning puts on his dress coat and goes out calling.

The doctor rubs his hands briskly and in a consoling manner.

"I am cold. It is a cutting frost. Just let me get warmed up," he says with an expression which says that all that is necessary is for him to get warmed up, and as soon as he is warm he will fix it all.

"Well, how is it?"

Iván Ilích feels that the doctor wants to say, "How

are our affairs?" but that he himself feels that it would not do to speak in this manner, and so he says, "How did you pass the night?"

Iván Ilích looks at the doctor with a questioning expression:

"Will you never feel ashamed of lying?"

But the doctor does not want to understand the expression, and Iván Ilích says:

"Just as terribly as ever. The pain does not pass away, does not subside. If it would stop just a little!"

"You patients are always like that. Well, sir, now, it seems, I am all warmed up, and even most exact Praskóvya Féodorovna would not be able to object to my temperature. Well, sir, good morning," and the doctor presses his hand.

Throwing aside his former playfulness, the doctor begins with a serious glance to investigate the patient, his pulse, his temperature, and there beginappings and auscultations.

Iván Ilích knows full well and indubitably that all this is nonsense and mere deception, but when the doctor, getting down on his knees, stretches out over him, leaning his ear now higher up, and now lower down, and with a significant expression on his face makes over him all kinds of gymnastic evolutions, Iván Ilích submits to it, as he submitted to the speeches of the lawyers, though he knew well that they were ranting all the time, and why they were ranting.

The doctor was still kneeling on the divan, tapping at something, when Praskóvya Féodorovna's silk dress rustled at the door, and there was heard her reproach to Peter for not having announced to her the doctor's arrival.

She comes in, kisses her husband, and immediately proceeds to prove that she got up long ago, and that only by a misunderstanding did she fail to be present when the doctor came.

Iván Ilích looks at her, examines her whole figure, and finds fault with the whiteness, chubbiness, and cleanliness of her hands and neck, the gloss of her hair, and the sparkle of her vivacious eyes. He hates her with the whole strength of his soul. Her touch makes him suffer from an access of hatred toward her.

Her relation to him and his sickness is still the same. As the doctor had worked out for himself a relation to his patients, which he was unable to divest himself of, so she had worked out a certain relation to him, — that he was somehow not doing what he ought to do, and was himself to blame for it, and she lovingly reproached him for it, — and was unable to divest herself of this relation to him.

“Well, he pays no attention. He does not take the medicine on time. Above all else, he lies down in a position which, no doubt, is injurious to him, — with his legs up.”

She told the doctor how he made Gerásim hold up his legs.

The doctor smiled a contemptuously kind smile:

“Well, what is to be done? These patients at times invent such foolish things, — but we can forgive them.”

When the examination was ended, the doctor looked at his watch, and Praskóvya Fédorovna announced to Iván Ilích that she did not care what he would do, but she had sent for a famous doctor, who in company with Mikhaíl Danílovich (so the ordinary doctor was called) would make an examination and have a consultation.

“Don’t object to this, if you please. I am doing this for my own sake,” she said ironically, giving him to understand that she was doing everything for his sake, and in this way did not give him the right to refuse her. He was silent, and frowned. He felt that this lie which surrounded him was becoming so entangled that it was getting hard to make out anything.

She was doing everything about him for her own sake,

and she told him that she was doing for herself everything that she really was doing for herself, as though it were such an incredible thing that he ought to understand it as the exact opposite.

Indeed, at half-past eleven the famous doctor arrived. Again there were auscultations and significant conversations in his presence and in another room about the kidney and the blind gut, and questions and answers with such significant looks that instead of the real question about life and death, which alone now stood before him, there again came forward the question about the kidney and the blind gut, which were not acting as they ought to, and which Mikhaíl Danílovich and the celebrity will for this reason attack and compel to get better.

The famous doctor departed with a serious, but not with a hopeless, look. In reply to the timid question, which Iván Ilích directed to him with eyes raised to him and shining with terror and hope, as to whether there was any possibility of recovery, he replied that he could not guarantee it, but that it was possible. The glance of hope with which Iván Ilích saw the doctor off was so pitiful that, seeing it, Praskóvya Fédorovna even burst out into tears as she went out of the cabinet, in order to give the famous doctor his fee.

The elation of spirit, produced by the doctor's encouragement, did not last long. There were again the same room, the same pictures, curtains, wall-paper, bottles, and the same paining, suffering body. Iván Ilích began to groan; they gave him an injection, and he forgot himself.

When he came to, it was growing dark; they brought him his dinner. He took with difficulty some soup, and again it was the same, and again nightfall.

After dinner, at seven o'clock, the room was entered by Praskóvya Fédorovna, who was dressed as for an evening entertainment, with swelling, raised up breasts, and traces



of powder on her face. She had talked to him in the morning of going to the theatre. Sarah Bernhardt was in the city, and they had a box which he had insisted that they should take. Now he forgot about it, and her attire offended him. But he concealed his offence when he recalled that he himself had insisted on their taking a box and going, because this was for the children an educational, æsthetic enjoyment.

Praskóvya Féodorovna came in satisfied with herself, but seemingly guilty. She sat down for awhile, asked him about his health, as he saw, merely to ask, but not to find out, knowing that there was nothing to find out, and began to speak of what she wanted to speak of, that she would not go at all if the box had not been engaged, and that with her were going Hélène, and their daughter, and Petríshchev (their daughter's fiancé), and that it was impossible to let them go by themselves. It really would give her more pleasure to stay at home; but he must be sure and do in her absence according to the doctor's prescription.

"Yes, Fédor Petróvich" (the fiancé) "wanted to come in. May he? And Líza."

"Let them come in."

The daughter came in. She was all dressed up, with a bared youthful body, that body which caused him to suffer so much; but she exposed it. She was strong, healthy, apparently in love, and vexed at the disease, suffering, and death, which interfered with her happiness.

There entered also Fédor Petróvich, in dress coat, with his hair fixed *à la Capoul*, with a long sinewy neck, tightly surrounded by a white collar, with an enormous white chest and close-fitting trousers over powerful thighs, with a white handkerchief drawn over his hand, and with an opera hat.

After him imperceptibly crawled in the little gymnasiast,

in a bran-new uniform, — poor fellow, — and with terrible blue marks under his eyes, the meaning of which Iván Ilích knew.

His son always looked pitiful to him, and terrible was his frightened and compassionate glance. Besides Gerásim, it seemed to Iván Ilích, Vása was the only one who understood and pitied him.

All sat down, and again asked about his health. There ensued a silence. Líza asked her mother about the opera-glass. Mother and daughter exchanged words about who was at fault for having mislaid it. It was an unpleasant incident.

Fédor Petróvich asked Iván Ilích whether he had seen Sarah Bernhardt. At first Iván Ilích did not understand what it was they were asking him, but later he said :

“No, and have you seen her already?”

“Yes, in Adrienne Lecouvreur.”

Praskóvya Fédorovna said that she was particularly good in this or that. Her daughter objected. There ensued a conversation about the art and the realism of her play, that very conversation which is always one and the same.

In the middle of the conversation Fédor Petróvich looked at Iván Ilích, and grew silent. The others looked at him, too, and grew silent. Iván Ilích was looking with glistening eyes ahead of him, apparently vexed at them. It was necessary to mend all this, but it was impossible to do so. It was necessary to interrupt the silence. Nobody could make up his mind to do so, and all felt terribly at the thought that now the decent lie would somehow be broken, and every one would see clearly how it all was. Líza was the first to make up her mind. She interrupted the silence. She wanted to conceal what all were experiencing, but she gave herself away :

“If we are to go at all, it is time we started,” she said, looking at her watch, a present from her father, and she

smiled at the young man a faint, significant smile about something which they alone knew, and got up, causing her dress to rustle.

All arose, said good-bye, and departed.

When they went out, it seemed to Iván Ilích that he was feeling easier: there was no lie, — it departed with them, — but the pain was still left. The old pain, the old terror made him feel neither harder, nor easier. It was all worse.

Again minute after minute elapsed, and hour after hour, and again the same, and again no end, and more and more terrible the inevitable end.

“Yes, call Gerásim,” he answered to Peter’s question.

## IX.

HIS wife returned late in the night. She entered on tiptoe, but he heard her. He opened his eyes and hastened to shut them again. She wanted to send Gerásim away and to sit up with him. He opened his eyes, and said :

“ No, go.”

“ Do you suffer very much ?”

“ It makes no difference.”

“ Take some opium.”

He consented, and took some. She went away.

Until about three o'clock he was in agonizing oblivion. It seemed to him that he with his pain was being shoved somewhere into a narrow, black, and deep bag, and shoved farther and farther, without coming out of it. And this terrible act was accompanied by suffering. And he was afraid, and wanted to go through the bag, and fought, and helped along. And suddenly he tore away, and fell, and woke up. The same Gerásim was sitting at his feet on the bed, drowsing calmly and patiently. But Iván Ilích was lying, his emaciated, stockinged feet resting on Gerásim's shoulders, and there was the same candle with the shade, and the same uninterrupted pain.

“ Go away, Gerásim,” he whispered.

“ Never mind, sir, I will sit up.”

“ No, go.”

He took off his feet, and lay down sidewise on his arm and began to feel pity for himself. He just waited for Gerásim to go to the adjoining room, and no longer restrained himself, but burst out into tears, like a child.

He wept on account of his helplessness, his terrible loneliness, the cruelty of men, the cruelty of God, the absence of God.

"Why hast Thou done all this? Why didst Thou bring me to this? Why, why dost Thou torment me so terribly?"

He did not expect any answer, and was weeping because there was no answer and could be none. The pain rose again, but he did not stir, did not call. He said to himself:

"Go on, strike me! But for what? What have I done to Thee? For what?"

Then he grew silent and stopped not only weeping, but also breathing, and became all attention: it was as though he listened, not to the voice which spoke with sounds, but to the voice of his soul, to the train of thoughts which rose in him.

"What do you want?" was the first clear expression, capable of being uttered in words, which he heard.

"What do you want? What do you want?" he repeated to himself. "What? Not to suffer. To live!" he answered.

And again he abandoned himself wholly to attention, to such tense listening, that his pain even did not distract him.

"To live? To live how?" asked the voice of his soul.

"To live as I used to live before, — well, pleasantly."

"As you lived before, well and pleasantly?" asked a voice. And he began in imagination to pass in review the best minutes of his pleasant life. But, strange to say, all these best minutes of his pleasant life now seemed to him to be different from what they had seemed to be before, — all of them, except the first recollections of childhood. There, in childhood, there had been something really agreeable, with which it would be possible to live if life should return; but the man who had expe-

rienced those pleasant sensations was no more ; it was like a recollection of somebody else.

As soon as there began that which resulted in the present man, in Iván Ilích, everything which then had appeared as joys now melted in his sight and changed into something insignificant and even abominable.

And the farther away from childhood and nearer to the present, the more insignificant and doubtful were the joys. This began with the law school. There had been there something truly good ; there had been there merriment, friendship, hopes. But in the upper classes these good minutes had happened more rarely ; those were the recollections of the love of woman. Then all got mixed, and there was still less of what was good. Farther on there was still less of what was good, and the farther, the less.

“The marriage — so sudden, and the disenchantment, and the odour from my wife’s mouth, and sensuality, and hypocrisy ! And this dead service, and these cares about the money, and thus passed a year, and two, and ten, and twenty, — all the time the same. The farther, the deader. It was as though I were going evenly down-hill, imagining that I was going up-hill. And so it was. In public opinion I went up-hill, — and just in that proportion did my life vanish under me. — And now it is all done, — go and die !

“So what is this ? Why ? Impossible. It cannot be that life should be so senseless and so abominable ! And if it has indeed been so abominable and meaningless, what sense is there in dying, and in dying with suffering ? Something is wrong.

“Perhaps I did not live the proper way,” it suddenly occurred to him. “But how can that be, since I did everything that was demanded of me ?” he said to himself, and immediately he repelled from himself this only solution of the whole enigma of life and of death, as something totally impossible.



“What do you want now? To live? To live how? To live as you live in the court, when the bailiff proclaims, ‘The court is coming!’ The court is coming, the court is coming!” he repeated to himself. “Here is the court! But I am not guilty!” he shouted in anger. “For what?” And he stopped weeping and, turning his face to the wall, began to think of nothing but this one thing: “Why, for what is all this terror?”

But, no matter how much he thought, he found no answer. And when the thought occurred to him, and it occurred to him often, that all this was due to the fact that he had not lived in the proper way, he immediately recalled all the regularity of his life, and dispelled this strange thought.

## X.

Two more weeks passed. Iván Ilích no longer rose from his divan. He did not want to lie in his bed, and lay on the divan. Lying nearly all the time with his face to the wall, he suffered in loneliness the same insoluble sufferings, and in loneliness thought the same insoluble thought. "What is this? Is this really death?" And an inner voice answered him: "Yes, it is." "What are these torments for?" and the voice answered: "For no special reason." After that and outside of that there was nothing.

From the very beginning of his sickness, from the first time that he went to see the doctor, his life was divided into two opposite moods which gave way to one another: now it was despair and the expectancy of incredible and terrible death, and now hope and an absorbing observation of the activity of his body. Now there was before his eyes nothing but his kidney or gut, which had for the time being deflected from the fulfilment of its obligations, and now it was the one incomprehensible, terrible death, from which it was impossible to be freed in any way whatever.

These two moods alternated from the very beginning of his sickness; but the farther his disease proceeded, the more doubtful and fantastic did his imagination grow in respect to the kidney, and the more real came to be the consciousness of impending death.

He needed but to recall what he had been three months before and what he now was, to recall how

evenly he had been going down-hill, in order that every possibility of hope should be destroyed.

During the last stage of the loneliness in which he was, lying with his face turned to the back of the divan, of that loneliness amidst a populous city and his numerous acquaintances and his family, — a loneliness fuller than which can nowhere be found, — neither at the bottom of the sea, nor in the earth, — during the last stages of this terrible loneliness Iván Ilích lived in his imagination only in the past. One after another there arose before him pictures of his past. They always began with what was nearest in time and ran back to what was most remote, to childhood, and there they stopped. If Iván Ilích thought of the stewed prunes which he was offered to-day to eat, he recalled the raw, wrinkled French prunes of his childhood, their particular taste, and the abundance of saliva when he reached the stone, and side by side with this recollection of the taste there arose a whole series of recollections from that time, — the nurse, the brother, the toys.

“I must not think of this, — it is too painful,” Iván Ilích said to himself, and again transferred himself to the present. A button on the back of the divan and wrinkles in the morocco. “The morocco is expensive, — not durable, — there was a quarrel on account of it. It was a different kind of morocco, and a different quarrel, when we tore father’s portfolio, and were punished, and mother brought us patties.” And again his thoughts stopped at his childhood, and again he felt a pain, and tried to dispel it and to think of something else.

And again, together with this train of his recollections, another train of recollections passed through his soul as to how his disease increased and grew. Again it was the same: the farther back, the more there was of life. There was more good in life and more of life itself. Both blended.

"Just as my suffering is growing worse and worse, so my whole life has been getting worse and worse," he thought. There was one bright point there behind, in the beginning of life, and then everything grows blacker and blacker, and goes faster and faster. "In inverse proportion to the square of the distance from death," thought Iván Ilích. And this representation of a stone flying downward with increasing rapidity fell into his soul. Life, a series of increasing sufferings, flew more and more rapidly toward its end, a most terrible suffering. "I fly—" He trembled, and shook, and wanted to resist; but he knew that it was useless to resist, and again he looked at the back of the divan with eyes weary from looking, which could not help but look at what was in front of him, and he waited and waited for that terrible fall, push, and destruction.

"It is impossible to resist," he said to himself. "But if I only understood what it is all for. And this is impossible. One might be able to explain it, if it could be said that I had not lived properly. But that can by no means be asserted," he said to himself, as he recalled all the lawfulness, regularity, and decency of his life. "It is impossible to admit this," he said to himself, smiling with his lips, as though some one could see this smile of his and be deceived by it. "There is no explanation! Torment, death — Why?"

## XI.

THUS passed two weeks. During these weeks there took place an event which had been desired by Iván Ilích and his wife. Petríshchev made a formal proposal. This happened in the evening. On the following day Praskóvya Fédorovna entered her husband's room, wondering how she should announce Fédor Petróvich's proposal to Iván Ilích, but that very night Iván Ilích had taken a turn for the worst. Praskóvya Fédorovna found him on the same divan, but in a new position. He was lying on his back and groaning and looking in front of him with an arrested glance.

She began to speak of the medicines. He transferred his look to her. She did not finish saying what she had begun, — such malice, especially to her, was expressed in this glance.

"For Christ's sake, let me die in peace," he said.

She wanted to go away, but just then her daughter entered, and she went up to him to greet him. He looked at his daughter in the same way as at his wife, and in reply to her questions about his health he said dryly to her that he would soon free them all from himself. Both grew silent and, after sitting awhile, went out.

"In what way is it our fault?" Líza said to her mother. "It is as though we had done something. I am sorry for papa, but why does he torment us?"

The doctor arrived at the usual hour. Iván Ilích answered him, "Yes, no," without taking his glance of fury from him, and finally said:

"You know yourself that nothing will help me, so let it go."

"We can alleviate your suffering," said the doctor.

"You cannot do that, either, — let it go."

The doctor went into the drawing-room and informed Praskóvya Fédorovna that he was in a very bad state, and that there was one means, — opium, — in order to alleviate the sufferings, which must be terrible.

The doctor said that his physical suffering was terrible, and that was true; but more terrible than his physical suffering was his moral suffering, and in this lay his chief agony.

His moral suffering consisted in this, that on that night, as he looked upon Gerásim's sleepy, good-natured face with its prominent cheek-bones, it suddenly occurred to him, "What if indeed my whole life, my conscious life, was not the right thing?"

It occurred to him that what before had presented itself to him as an utter impossibility, namely, that he had passed all his life improperly, might after all be the truth. It occurred to him that those faint endeavours at struggling against that which was regarded as good by persons in superior positions, faint endeavours which he had immediately repelled from himself, might be real, while everything else might be the wrong thing. He tried to defend all this to himself. And suddenly he felt the weakness of everything which he was defending, and there was nothing to defend.

"And if this is so," he said to himself, "and I go away from life with the consciousness of having ruined everything which was given me, and that it is impossible to mend it, what then?"

He lay down on his back and began to pass his life in review in an entirely new fashion. When, in the morning, he saw the lackey, then his wife, then his daughter, then the doctor, every one of their motions, every word of



theirs confirmed for him the terrible truth which had been revealed to him the night before. In them he saw himself, all that he had been living by, and saw clearly that all that was not the right thing, that it was all a terrible, huge deception, which concealed both life and death. This consciousness increased, multiplied tenfold his physical sufferings. He groaned and tossed about and picked at his clothes. It seemed to him that his clothes choked and suffocated him. And for this he hated them.

He was given a big dose of opium and he fell into oblivion, but at dinner the same began once more. He drove all away from himself, and tossed from one place to another.

His wife came to him, and said:

"*Jean*, my darling, do this for me." ("For me?") "It cannot hurt, and frequently it helps. Healthy people frequently do it."

He opened his eyes wide.

"What? Communion? What for? It is not necessary! Still —"

She burst out weeping.

"Yes, my dear? I will send for our priest, — he is such a nice man."

"All right, very well," he muttered.

When the priest came and took his confession, he softened, seemed to feel a relief from his doubts, and so from his suffering, and for a moment was assailed by hope. He began once more to think of his blind gut and the possibility of mending it. He took his communion with tears in his eyes.

When, after the communion, he was put down on the bed, he for a moment felt easier, and again there appeared hope of life. He began to think of the operation which had been proposed to him. "I want to live, to live," he said to himself. His wife came back to congratulate him; she said the customary words, and added:

"Truly, are you not feeling better?"

Without looking at her, he said, "Yes."

Her attire, her figure, the expression of her face, the sound of her voice,—everything told him one and the same thing: "It is not the right thing. Everything which you have lived by is a lie, a deception, which conceals from you life and death." The moment he thought so, there arose his hatred, and with his hatred came physical, agonizing sufferings, and with the sufferings the consciousness of inevitable, near perdition. Something new had taken place: something began to screw up and shoot, and to choke him.

The expression of his face, when he uttered, "Yes," was terrible. Having said this "Yes," he looked straight into her face and with unusual rapidity for his weakness turned his face downward, and called out:

"Go away, go away, leave me alone!"

## XII.

FROM this moment there began that cry which lasted for three days and was so terrible that it was not possible to hear it without horror through two doors. At the moment when he answered his wife, he understood that he was lost, that there was no return, that the end had come, the real end, and yet his doubt was not solved,—it remained the doubt it had been.

“Oo! Oo! Oo!” he cried, in various intonations. He had begun to cry, “I do not want to!” and continued to cry the sound “oo.”

During the three days, in the course of which time did not exist for him, he fluttered about in that black bag whither an invisible, invincible force was shoving him. He struggled as a prisoner condemned to death struggles in the hands of the hangman, knowing that he cannot be saved; and with every minute he felt that, in spite of all the efforts of the struggle, he was coming nearer and nearer to what terrified him. He felt that his suffering consisted in his being shoved into that black hole, and still more in his not being able to get through it. What hindered him from crawling through was the consciousness of this, that his life was good. This justification of his life grappled him and did not allow him to get on and tormented him more than anything.

Suddenly a certain force pushed him in the chest and in the side, and still more compressed his throat, and he fell into the hole, and there, at the end of the hole, there was some light. What happened to him was what happens in a railway car, when a man thinks that he is

riding forward, while he is riding backward, and suddenly discovers the real direction.

"Yes, it was all the wrong thing," he said to himself, "but that is nothing. It is possible, it is possible to do the right thing. What is the right thing?" he asked himself, and suddenly grew quiet.

This happened at the end of the third day, two hours before his death. At just this time the little gymnasiast stole quietly up to his father, and walked over to his bed. The dying man was crying pitifully and tossing about his hands. His hand fell on the head of the little gymnasiast. The little gymnasiast caught it and pressed it to his lips, and burst out weeping.

Just then Iván Ilích tumbled in and saw the light, and it was revealed to him that his life had not been what it ought to have been, but that it was still possible to mend it. He asked himself: "What is the right thing?" and he grew silent, and listened. Here he felt that some one was kissing his hand. He opened his eyes and glanced at his son. He was sorry for him. His wife came up to him. He glanced at her. She looked at him with a desperate expression, her mouth being wide open and the tears remaining unwiped on her nose. He was sorry for her.

"Yes, I am tormenting them," he thought. "They are sorry, but they will be better off when I am dead." That was what he meant to say, but he did not have the strength to utter it. "However, what is the use of talking? I must do," he thought. He indicated his son to his wife with his glance, and said:

"Take him away — am sorry — and you, too —"

He wanted to add, "Forgive," but said, "Forgive," and being unable to correct himself, he waved his hand, knowing that who needed would understand.

Suddenly it became clear to him that what had been vexing him and could not come out, now was coming out

all at once, from two sides, from ten sides, from all sides. They were to be pitied ; it was necessary to do something to save them pain, to free them and free himself from these sufferings.

"How good and how simple!" he thought. "And the pain?" he asked himself. "What of it? Well, pain, where are you?"

He began to listen.

"Yes, here it is. Well, let it pain."

"And death? Where is it?"

And he sought his former customary fear of death, and could not find it.

"Where is it? What death?"

There was no fear, because there was also no death.

Instead of death there was a light.

"So this it is!" he suddenly spoke out in a loud voice.

"What joy!"

For him all this took place in one moment, and the significance of this moment no longer changed. But for those who were present the agony lasted two hours longer. Something palpitated in his heart, and his emaciated body jerked. Then the palpitation and the râle grew rarer and rarer.

"It is ended!" some one said over him.

He heard these words and repeated them in his soul.

"Death is ended," he said to himself. "It is no more."

He inhaled the air, stopped in the middle of his breath, stretched himself, and died.

*March 22, 1886.*

# THE POWER OF DARKNESS

Or, "When the Claw Is Caught the Whole Bird  
Is Lost"

1886





# THE POWER OF DARKNESS

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## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ OF ACT I.

PETER, a rich peasant, forty-two years of age ; married for the second time ; sickly.

ANÍSYA, his wife, thirty-two years of age ; a dandyish woman.

AKULÍNA, Peter's daughter by his first marriage, sixteen years of age ; hard of hearing and silly.

ANYÚTKA, a second daughter, ten years old.

NIKÍTA, their hired hand, twenty-five years old ; a fop.

AKÍM, Nikíta's father, fifty years old ; homely, and God-fearing.

MATRÉNA, his wife, fifty years old.

MARÍNA, an orphan girl, twenty-two years old.

## ACT I.

*The action takes place in a large village, in autumn. The scene represents the inside of Peter's spacious hut. Peter is seated on a bench, mending a horse-collar. Anísya and Akulína are spinning.*

SCENE I. Peter, Anísya, and Akulína (*the last two singing together*).

PETER (*looking through the window*). The horses have gone away again. Before we know it the colt will be killed. Nikíta! Oh, Nikíta! Are you deaf? (*Listens. To the women.*) Stop your singing,—I can't hear a thing!

NIKÍTA'S voice, *in the yard*. What?

PETER. Drive in the horses!

NIKÍTA'S voice. I will! Only give me a chance!

PETER (*shaking his head*). Oh, these hired hands! If I were a well man, I would not have one for the world. There is only worry with them. (*Gets up and sits down again.*) Nikíta! I shall get no answer. I wish one of you would go. Akulína, go and drive them in!

AKULÍNA. What, the horses?

PETER. What else did I say?

AKULÍNA. Right away. (*Exit.*)

SCENE II. Peter and Anísya.

PETER. The young scamp is not much of a farmer. It takes him an age to do a thing.

ANÍSYA. You aren't very lively yourself. From the

oven to the bench, that's as far as you can go. You are only hard on people.

PETER. If I were not hard on you, I should not be able to find a thing in a year. Oh, what people!

ANÍSYA. You make one attend to a dozen things at once, and you scold all the while. It is easy enough to command when you are lying on the oven.

PETER (*sighing*). If it were not for this sickness of mine I should not keep him a day.

AKULÍNA'S *voice behind the scene*. Here, horsy, here, horsy! (*One hears the neighing of a colt and horses running in through the gate. The gate creaks.*)

PETER. All he knows is to prattle. Really, I would not keep him.

ANÍSYA (*mocking him*). I won't keep him. Move about and then talk!

### SCENE III. The same and Akulína.

AKULÍNA (*entering*). I had the hardest time driving them in. The dappled gray —

PETER. And where is Nikíta?

AKULÍNA. Nikíta? He is standing in the street.

PETER. What is he standing there for?

AKULÍNA. What is he standing there for? He is standing around the corner, and is talking.

PETER. I can't get anything out of her. With whom is he talking?

AKULÍNA (*not hearing him*). What? (*Peter waves his hand to Akulína; she goes back to her spinning.*)

### SCENE IV. The same and Anyútka.

ANYÚTKA (*running in. To her mother*). Nikíta's parents have come to see him. Indeed, they are taking him home to get married,

ANÍSYA. Are you telling the truth?

ANYÚTKA. May I die on the spot if I am not! (*Laughing.*) I was going by when Nikíta called me: "Good-bye," says he, "Anna Petróna! Come to my wedding! I," says he, "am going away from you." And he laughed.

ANÍSYA (*to her husband*). They are in great need of you. There he is going away of his own accord. And you say: "I'll drive him away!"

PETER. Let him go. I will find somebody else.

ANÍSYA. But haven't you paid the money in advance?  
(*Anyútká walks up to the door and listens to what they are saying. Exit.*)

SCENE V. Anísya, Peter, and Akulína.

PETER (*frowning*). What money he owes me he will work off in the summer.

ANÍSYA. Yes, you are only too glad to let him go. You save so much. In winter you want me to do all the work by myself, like a horse. The girl is not much good for work, and you will be lying on the oven. I know you!

PETER. What sense is there in wagging your tongue for nothing?

ANÍSYA. The yard is full of cattle. You did not sell the cow, and you have left all the sheep for winter. There is enough work to do to feed and water them, and you want to send the hired hand away. I am not going to do a man's work! I will lie down on the oven, as you do, and let everything go to perdition,—I don't care what you do.

PETER (*to Akulína*). Go for the feed! I think it is time.

AKULÍNA. For the feed? All right. (*Puts on a caftan and takes a rope.*)

ANÍSIA. I will not work for you! You may be sure I won't. Go and work yourself.

PETER. Stop. Don't carry on like a crazy sheep!

ANÍSIA. You are yourself a mad dog! There is no work in you, and I don't get any joy out of you. You do nothing but eat all the time. A lazy dog you are, upon my word.

PETER (*spits out and puts on his coat*). Pshaw, the Lord be merciful to you! I must go and find out what is up. (*Exit.*)

ANÍSIA (*crying after him*). Rotten, long-nosed devil!

#### SCENE VI. Anísya and Akulína.

AKULÍNA. Why are you scolding father?

ANÍSIA. Shut up, you fool!

AKULÍNA (*walking up to the door*). I know why you are. You are yourself a fool, and a dog. I am not afraid of you.

ANÍSIA. What do you say? (*Jumps up and looks around for something to throw at her.*) If you don't look out I will hit you with the plough-handle.

AKULÍNA (*opening the door*). You are a dog, a devil, that's what you are! A devil, a dog, a dog, a devil! (*Runs away.*)

#### SCENE VII. Anísya (*alone*).

ANÍSIA (*in thought*). "Come to the wedding," says he. What are they up to? To marry him? Look out, Nikíta! If that is your trick, I will—I cannot live without him. I will not let him.

#### SCENE VIII. Anísya and Nikíta.

NIKÍTA (*enters, looking about him. Seeing that Anísya is alone, he walks over to her. In a whisper*). What am



I to do, my dear? Father has come to take me away. He commands me to go home. "We want to marry you by all means," says he, "and have you stay at home."

ANÍSIA. Well, get married. What is that to me?

NIKÍTA. I declare! I was hoping to consult with you, and you tell me to get married! What is the matter? (*Winking.*) Or have you forgotten?

ANÍSIA. Get married. What do I care?

NIKÍTA. What are you snorting about? I declare! She won't let me pat her. What is the matter with you?

ANÍSIA. As to your wishing to leave, go if you want to! I don't need you! That is what I have to say to you.

NIKÍTA. Stop, Anísia. Did I say I wanted to forget you? Not on my life. I sha'n't leave you for anything. I was thinking like this: let them marry me, but I will come back to you. If they will only not keep me at home!

ANÍSIA. You won't be of much use to me when you are married.

NIKÍTA. But what am I to do, my dear? It is not possible to oppose father's will.

ANÍSIA. You are putting it on your father, but it is your trick. You have been carrying on all the time with your sweetheart, Marína. It is she who has put you on to it. I see now why she came here the other day.

NIKÍTA. Marína? What do I care for her? I can't help her sticking to me!

ANÍSIA. Then why did your father come? You told him to. You have deceived me! (*Weeping.*)

NIKÍTA. Anísia, do you believe in God, or not? I have not even dreamt of this. I have absolutely no knowledge of it. My dad thought it all out himself.

ANÍSIA. If you did not want it yourself, could they catch you in a sling?

NIKÍTA. I have considered that it is impossible to oppose father's will, although I have no desire to marry.

ANÍSIA. Refuse, and that's all.

NIKÍTA. There was a fellow who did refuse, and so they gave him a walloping. I do not want that either: they say it is ticklish —

ANÍSIA. Stop jesting. Listen, Nikíta: if you are going to take Marína for a wife, I do not know what I shall do to myself. I will take my life! I have sinned, and have violated the Law, but that cannot be remedied now. If you go away, I will do harm to myself —

NIKÍTA. Why should I want to go away? I could have gone long ago, if I had wanted to. The other day Iván Seménych offered me a coachman's place. What a fine life that would be! But I did not go, for I considered that others like me. If you did not love me, that would be a different matter.

ANÍSIA. Keep this in mind! The old man can't live long, and so, I think, we might be able to cover up our sin. I thought I might wed you, and you would be the master.

NIKÍTA. What is the use saying this? What difference does it make to me? I work as though for myself. My master likes me, and, of course, my mistress loves me. But I can't help women's liking me, — that's all.

ANÍSIA. Will you love me?

NIKÍTA (*embracing her*). Like this! You are deep in my heart —

SCENE IX. The same and Matréna (*entering and crossing herself before the images for a long time. Nikíta and Anísya rush away from each other*).

MATRÉNA. I have neither seen nor heard a thing. You have been disporting with the woman, — what of it? A calf, you know, likes to play, too. Why not? You

are young yet. My son, the master has been asking for you in the yard.

NIKÍTA. I just came to get the axe.

MATRÉNA. I know, I know, my friend, what kind of an axe you mean. That kind of an axe is mostly near women.

NIKÍTA (*bending down and picking up the axe*). Well, mother, do you really intend marrying me off? I consider it all useless. And, then, I have no desire.

MATRÉNA. My darling, what is the use of marrying? You had better go on living as you do, but it is the old man who wants it. Go, my dear, we will fix matters without you.

NIKÍTA. This is remarkable: now I am to marry, and now again I am not. I can't make it out at all. (*Exit.*)

#### SCENE X. Anísya and Matréna.

ANÍSYA. Well, Aunt Matréna, do you really want to get him married?

MATRÉNA. What are we to marry him with, my dear? We have no means, you know. My old man is just a-talking, without any sense whatsoever. He keeps insisting that he should marry. But this is a matter above his mind. Horses, you know, do not gallop away from oats, and people ought not to look out for other things, while they have something good at hand,— just so it is in this case. Can't I see (*winking*) what is up here?

ANÍSYA. Why should I conceal it from you, Aunt Matréna? You know everything. I have sinned: I love your son.

MATRÉNA. You did tell me some news: Aunt Matréna did not know it. But I tell you, woman, Aunt Matréna is sly, oh, so sly. Let me tell you my dear,— Aunt Matréna can see a yard below ground. I know everything, my dear! I know what women want sleeping

powders for. I have brought some. (*Unties the knot in her handkerchief and takes out some powders in a piece of paper.*) What is good for me, I see; and what I ought not to know, I neither see nor hear. That's the way it is with me. Aunt Matréná was once young herself. You see, one must know how to get along with a fool. I know all the ropes. I see, my dear, your old man is pretty far gone. What strength has he? Stick a fork into him, and no blood will come out. I think you will bury him by spring. You will have to take somebody on your farm. And is not my son as good a peasant as any? Then, what advantage could I gain from driving him away from a good thing? You do not suppose I am my son's enemy?

ANÍSIA. If he only would not leave us.

MATRÉNÁ. He will not, my birdie. That is all nonsense. You know my old man. His brain is all cracked. At times he fills it up, and braces it with a post that you can't knock out from under him.

ANÍSIA. What caused all this?

MATRÉNÁ. You see, my dear, my boy has a weakness for women, and, it must be said, he is a fine-looking fellow. So, you see, he has worked on the railroad. At that time a certain orphan girl was serving there as a cook, and she was all the time after him.

ANÍSIA. Marína?

MATRÉNÁ. The same, — may she be paralyzed. I do not know whether anything happened or not, only my old man found it out. He heard it from others, or she herself told him —

ANÍSIA. But she was bold, — that accursed one!

MATRÉNÁ. So my old man — the stupid fellow he is — insists upon my son's marrying her so as to cover the sin. "We will take our boy home," says he, "and get him married." I tried every way to dissuade him, but all in vain. Well, thought I, let it be. I will try in a dif-

ferent manner. These fools, my dear, have to be enticed. You have to pretend to agree with them, but the moment it comes to business, you switch them off. A woman, you see, comes a-flying down from the oven, having thought out a hundred thoughts — so how is he to find it out? "Yes, old man," says I, "that is good; only we must consider it well. Come," says I, "let us go to our son, and let us consider the matter with Peter Ignátych. Let us hear what he has to say." And this is why we have come.

ANÍSYA. Oh, aunty, what will happen now? If his father commands him?

MATRÉNA. Commands? To the dogs with his command. Don't have any fears! It will not happen. I will soon thresh out the whole matter with your old man, so that nothing will be left of it. This is the very reason why I have come along with him. How stupid it would be for me to have my son marry a slut, while he is living in happiness here, and happiness is ahead of him! I am not such a fool as all that.

ANÍSYA. Marína has been coming to see him here, too. Would you believe it, aunty, — when I was told that he was to get married, I felt as though somebody had stuck a knife into my heart. I thought he had a liking for her.

MATRÉNA. Not at all, my dear. He is not such a fool. He would not think of loving a homeless vagabond. You must know Nikíta is a clever fellow. But you, my dear, have no fear! We sha'n't take him away in a lifetime. We will not marry him off. As long as you let him have money, let him stay here.

ANÍSYA. I feel that if Nikíta went away I should not want to live.

MATRÉNA. That is the way with young people! And it is no wonder. You are a healthy young woman, and have to live with such a worthless rag —

ANÍSYA. Believe me, aunty, I am tired, dreadfully

tired of my old man, that long-nosed dog. I wish my eyes did not see him.

MATRÉNA. Yes, that is the way it goes. Come, see this. (*In a whisper, looking around.*) You see I went to see an old man for some powders, and he gave me two kinds. Look here. "This," says he, "is a sleeping powder. Give him one," says he. "It will make him sleep so hard that you can do anything you please. And this," says he, "is such a drug that if you give it in a drink it cannot be discovered, but its strength is great. It is to be given seven times," says he, "and every time a pinchful. Repeat it seven times. And freedom," says he, "will soon come to her."

ANÍSYA. Oh, oh, oh! What is this?

MATRÉNA. "It leaves no traces," says he. He took a rouble for it. "I can't do it for less," says he. Because, you see, it is hard to get. My dear, I gave him my money for it. I thought to myself I would take it down to Anísyá, whether she wanted it or not.

ANÍSYA. Oh, oh! But maybe something bad will come of it?

MATRÉNA. What bad can there be, my dear? It would be different if your husband were a healthy man; but as it is he barely lives. He is not a live fellow. There are many such.

ANÍSYA. Oh, my wretched head! I am afraid, aunty, there might be some sin in it. No, I do not like it.

MATRÉNA. I can take it back.

ANÍSYA. Are these to be dissolved in water, like the other?

MATRÉNA. "In tea," says he, "it is better. It can't be detected," says he. "They leave no smell, nothing." He is a clever fellow.

ANÍSYA (*taking the powders*). Oh, my wretched head! Would I have thought of such things if my life were not so hard?



MATRÉNA. Don't forget the rouble. I promised the old fellow I would bring it to him. He is worried about it.

ANÍSYA. Of course. (*Goes to a coffer and conceals the powders.*)

MATRÉNA. You must keep them so, my dear, that people do not find them out. If, God forbid, something should be discovered, say they are for cockroaches. (*Takes the rouble.*) They are also good for cockroaches — (*Interrupts her speech.*)

SCENE XI. The same, Peter, and Akím.

AKÍM (*enter. Crosses himself before the image.*).

PETER (*enter. Sits down.*). So what is it, Uncle Akím?

AKÍM. 'Twere better, Ignátych, 'twere better, so to speak — for, otherwise, you know, it may lead to badness — I should like, so, to take my son away, for work. And if you permit it, so — 'Twere better —

PETER. All right, all right. Sit down, and let us have a chat. (*Akím sits down.*) Well? Do you want to get him married?

MATRÉNA. As for marrying, Peter Ignátych, we can put it off. You know yourself, Ignátych, what want we live in. We have barely enough to live on, so how are we to get him married? How are we to marry him?

PETER. Consider what is best.

MATRÉNA. There is no hurry about getting married. It is like this: it is not a raspberry that will drop off.

PETER. It is a good thing to get married.

AKÍM. I should like to, so to speak — Because, so to speak — there is some work in the city, some profitable work I have there, you know.

MATRÉNA. Work! To clean privies. When he came home the other day, pshaw, I just vomited and vomited!

AKÍM. That is so: at first, so to speak, it takes your breath away; but when you get used to it, it is all right. It is just like the swills, so to speak, very much like it. And as to the smell, so to speak, fellows like us must not be offended by it. We can change our clothes, for all that. I wanted Nikíta to go home and, so to speak, look after things. Let him look after the house, and so I will earn something in town —

PETER. You want to leave your son at home, — that is all right. But how about the money you have taken on account?

AKÍM. That's so, that's so, Ignátych. You have said that correctly, so to speak, because if you have hired yourself out you have sold yourself, and you have to abide by it, so to speak. But, if he could get married, so to speak, would you let him off for awhile?

PETER. There is no objection to that.

MATRÉNA. Only we do not agree upon it. I will lay everything before you, Peter Ignátych, as I would before God. You will judge between my old man and me. He has taken it into his head to marry him off. And to whom is it he marries him? If she were a decent girl, I would not be my son's enemy; but this one has a fault.

AKÍM. Now this is not right. You are accusing the girl for nothing, so to speak, for nothing. Because this girl has been wronged by my son do you see. The same girl, you see.

PETER. How has she been wronged?

AKÍM. It appears, so to speak, she has been wronged by Nikíta, — by Nikíta, you see.

MATRÉNA. Stop a moment. I can express myself better than you, so let me tell it. You know yourself that our son used to work on the railroad before he came to your house. Now a girl, Marína by name, who was a cook for the workmen, — she is not very clever, — has

been after him. This same girl accuses our son Nikíta of having betrayed her.

PETER. That is not good.

MATRÉNA. She is herself not much good. She, the slut, is running around among people.

AKÍM. Again, old woman, you are not saying so, not at all so, so to speak, not so —

MATRÉNA. All my eagle here can say is "so, so," but what that "so" is, he does not know himself. Peter Ignátych, ask other people about this girl, and you will hear the same as I have been telling you. She is a homeless vagabond.

PETER (*to Akím*). If it is like that, Uncle Akím, there is no reason for his marrying her. A daughter-in-law is not a bast shoe that you can take off your leg.

AKÍM (*excitedly*). It is false, old woman, just so, what you say about the girl is false. Because the girl is very good, so, very good, so to speak, I am sorry for her, so to speak, for the girl.

MATRÉNA. He is just like Maremyána the mendicant, who weeps for the whole world, and sits breadless at home. You are sorry for the girl, but you are not sorry for your son. Tie her around your neck, and walk about with her. What good is there in talking such nonsense?

AKÍM. No, it is not nonsense.

MATRÉNA. Don't interrupt me! Let me finish!

AKÍM (*interrupting her*). No, it is not nonsense. You are coming back to yourself, so to speak, whether you are speaking of the girl or of yourself; you are coming back to yourself, but God will come back to His own, that's so. And so it is in this case.

MATRÉNA. Oh, it only makes my tongue ache to speak with you.

AKÍM. She is a hard-working girl, and, so to speak, looking well after herself, so to speak. And, so, in our

poverty she would be a great hand for us. The wedding expense is not great; but the wrong done is great to the girl, so to speak. The girl is an orphan, that's it. And there was a wrong done.

MATRÉNA. They all tell the same story.

ANÍSYA. Uncle Akím, you ought to hear what we women have to say. We can tell you something.

AKÍM. Lord, O Lord! Is not the girl a human being? Before God, so to speak, she is a human being, too. What do you think?

MATRÉNA. There is no stopping him —

PETER. Uncle Akím, you cannot believe everything the girls say. The young fellow is alive. He has something to say about it. Let us send for him and ask him whether it is true. He will not ruin a soul. Call the young fellow! (*Anísya gets up.*) Tell him his father wants to see him. (*Anísya exit.*)

## SCENE XII. The same, *without Anísya.*

MATRÉNA. Now, our protector, this was a wise judgment to let the son decide. Nowadays they don't get people married by force. The young man ought to be considered. He will not be willing to marry her for anything in the world, for that would only disgrace him. It is my opinion that he had better stay with you and serve his master. There is no reason for taking him away in the summer,—we can hire somebody. You give us ten roubles, and let him stay with you.

PETER. That is still ahead. Let us take everything in order. First end one thing, and then take up another.

AKÍM. I have been saying all this, Peter Ignátych, because, so to speak, things happen like this: You, so to speak, arrange matters so as to be best for yourself, and so forget about God. You think it is better to look out

for yourself, but, behold, you have only burdened yourself with trouble. We, so to speak, think that it is better without considering God, but it is worse.

PETER. Of course, we must think of God.

AKÍM. It is really worse; but if everything is done according to the Law, according to God's way, it, so to speak, makes your heart glad. It, so to speak, was before me like a dream. And so I guessed, so to speak, that I had better get my son married, in order, so to speak, to save him from sin: and so he will be at home, so to speak, according to the Law, while I will try, so to speak, to find something to do in town. It is a work of love, and it is proper. According to God's way, so to speak, it is better. And she is an orphan at that. For example, last year they took some wood from the clerk in just such a manner. They thought they would cheat him. And so they did, but God, so to speak, they did not cheat, well, and —

SCENE XIII. The same, Nikíta, and Anyútka.

NIKÍTA. Did you call me? (*Sits down, and takes out his tobacco.*)

PETER (*softly and reproachfully*). Don't you know the proprieties? Your father sent for you, and you take out your tobacco, and seat yourself. Come here, and stand up!

(*Nikíta stands up near the table, leaning carelessly against it, and smiling.*)

AKÍM. There is, so to speak, Nikíta, a complaint against you.

NIKÍTA. Who complains?

AKÍM. Who? A girl, an orphan, so to speak, complains. There is a complaint against you, so to speak, from that same Marína.

NIKÍTA (*laughing*). Marvellous! What kind of a com-

plaint is it? Who has told you about it? Maybe she herself?

AKÍM. I am now putting the questions, so to speak; and you must give the answers, so to speak. Did you tie yourself, so to speak, with the girl?

NIKÍTA. I can't positively make out what it is you are asking.

AKÍM. That is foolishness, so to speak, foolishness, I say; was there any foolishness between her and you, so to speak?

NIKÍTA. How do you mean it? Feeling lonely, I passed the time with the cook: I would play the accordion, and she would dance. What other foolishness do you mean?

PETER. Nikíta, don't beat about the bush. Answer straight to your father's questions.

AKÍM (*solemnly*). Nikíta! You may conceal it from men, but you will not conceal it from God. Nikíta, you must not, so to speak, lie! She is an orphan, so to speak, and it is easy to offend her. She is an orphan, so to speak. You tell me how it was.

NIKÍTA. I have nothing to tell. I am positively telling you everything, and there is nothing to tell. (*Getting excited.*) Of course, she may tell anything she pleases. Say anything you wish, — it does not affect me. Why did she not tell on Fédka Mikíshkin? How is it nowadays? A person may not jest even. Nothing prevents her talking.

AKÍM. O Nikíta, look out! The lie will come to the surface. Was there anything or not?

NIKÍTA (*aside*). I declare he is persistent! (*To Akím.*) I told you that I know nothing. There has been nothing between us. (*Angrily.*) May Christ not allow me to come off this plank. (*Crosses himself.*) I know absolutely nothing. (*Silence. Nikíta proceeds more excitedly.*) Why do you insist on my marrying her? This is really a scandal.



There is no law to compel a man to marry against his will. I have sworn that I know nothing.

MATRÉNA (*to her husband*). You foolish, stupid man! You believe everything they tell you. You have disgraced your son for nothing. Better let him stay with the master, as he has been doing. The master will now give us ten roubles in advance. When the time comes —

PETER. Well, how is it now, Uncle Akím?

AKÍM (*clicking his tongue, to his son*). Look out, Nikíta! A tear of offence does not flow past, but, so to speak, upon a man's head. Look out, or the same will happen with you.

NIKÍTA. I have nothing to look out for. You had better look out yourself. (*Sits down.*)

ANYÚTKA. I shall run and tell mother. (*Runs away.*)

#### SCENE XIV. Peter, Akím, Matréna, and Nikíta.

MATRÉNA (*to Peter*). So this is all there is to it, Peter Ignátych. He is a riotous fellow: if something gets into his head, you can't drive it out. We have troubled you in vain. Let my son live with you as he has heretofore. Keep my son, — he is your servant.

PETER. How is it now, Uncle Akím?

AKÍM. I did not force my son, — if only it is not so! I wanted, so to speak —

MATRÉNA. You don't know yourself what you are talking about. Let him stay here, as he has until now. Our son does not want to go to the house. And we do not need him: we shall get along without him.

PETER. I must say this much, Uncle Akím: if you take him away for the summer, I do not need him in winter. If he is to stay here, it must be for a year.

MATRÉNA. He will hire out for a year. If we need anybody during harvest time, we shall hire somebody.

Let our son stay here, and you give us ten roubles now —

PETER. Is it, then, for another year?

AKÍM (*sighing*). Well, if it has to be, I suppose, so to speak.

MATRÉNA. Again for a year, from the Saturday of St. Demetrius. You will not offend us about the price, but in the meantime let us have ten roubles. Excuse us now. (*Rises and bows.*)

SCENE XV. The same, Anísya, and Anyútka.

ANÍSYA (*sits down at a distance away*).

PETER. Well? If it is thus, let us go to the inn and celebrate the occasion. Come, Uncle Akím, and have some brandy.

AKÍM. I do not drink, that is, no liquor.

PETER. Well, then you will have some tea.

AKÍM. Tea is my weakness. I will take some.

PETER. And the women, too, will drink tea. You, Nikíta, drive in the sheep, and pick up the straw.

NIKÍTA. All right. (*All exeunt, except Nikíta. It is growing dark.*)

SCENE XVI. Nikíta alone.

NIKÍTA (*lighting a cigarette*). I declare, they insisted upon my telling them how I passed my time with the girls. It would take a long time to tell about that. "Marry her," says he. If I were to marry them all, I should have plenty of wives. What sense is there in my marrying, when I am living better than any married man, and people envy me? It was as though somebody pushed me to swear by the holy image. And thus I put a stop to the whole matter. They say it is dangerous to swear to an untruth. That is all foolishness, — nothing but talk. That is all.

SCENE XVII. *Nikíta and Akulína.*

AKULÍNA (*enter, in caftan. Puts down the rope, takes off her caftan, and goes into the storeroom*). Why don't you strike a light?

NIKÍTA. To look at you? I can see you without a light.

AKULÍNA. Go to!

SCENE XVIII. *The same and Anyútka.*

ANYÚTKA (*running in, in a whisper to Nikíta*). Nikíta, go quickly, there is some one asking for you truly.

NIKÍTA. Who?

ANYÚTKA. Marína from the railroad. She is standing around the corner.

NIKÍTA. You are fibbing.

ANYÚTKA. Truly.

NIKÍTA. What does she want?

ANYÚTKA. She wants you to come out. "I have but a word to say to Nikíta," says she. I began to ask her what it was, but she would not tell me. She asked me whether it was true that you are going to leave us. I told her that it was not true, that your father wanted to take you home and get you married, but that you had refused, and would stay another year with us. Then says she: "Send him to me, for Christ's sake. I must by all means speak one word to him." She has been waiting for quite awhile. Go to her.

NIKÍTA. God be with her, — I won't go.

ANYÚTKA. She says that if you do not come she will go into the house to you. "Truly, I will," says she.

NIKÍTA. Never mind. She will stay there awhile, and then she will go away.

ANYÚTKA. She asked me whether they wanted to marry you to Akulína.

AKULÍNA (*walks up to Nikíta, back of her spinning-wheel*). Who is to marry Akulína?

ANYÚTKA. Nikíta.

AKULÍNA. I declare! Who says so?

NIKÍTA. Evidently people say so. (*Looks at her and laughs*.) Akulína, will you marry me?

AKULÍNA. You? Sometime ago I might have married you perhaps, but now I won't.

NIKÍTA. Why not now?

AKULÍNA. Because you will not love me.

NIKÍTA. Why not?

AKULÍNA. Because you are told not to. (*Laughs*.)

NIKÍTA. Who tells me not to?

AKULÍNA. My stepmother. She is scolding all the time, and all the time watching you.

NIKÍTA (*laughing*). I declare! But you are shrewd.

AKULÍNA. Who, I? Why shrewd? Am I blind? She gave father a terrible tongue-lashing to-day, that big-snouted witch. (*Exit to the storeroom*.)

ANYÚTKA. Nikíta! Look there. (*Looks through the window*.) She is coming. Truly, she is. I am going away. (*Exit*.)

SCENE XIX. Nikíta, Akulína (*in the storeroom*), and Marína.

MARÍNA (*enter*). What are you doing with me?

NIKÍTA. What am I doing? Nothing.

MARÍNA. You want to abandon me.

NIKÍTA (*getting up, angrily*). What good is there in your coming?

MARÍNA. Ah, Nikíta!

NIKÍTA. Really, you are all queer — What did you come for?

MARÍNA. Nikíta!

NIKÍTA. What about Nikíta? I am Nikíta. What do you want? Come now, talk!

MARÍNA. I see you want to give me up and forget me.

NIKÍTA. What is there to remember? You don't know yourself. There you were standing around the corner, and you sent Anyútka for me. I did not come, so you ought to have known that I did not want you, very simply. Go away now!

MARÍNA. You don't want me! Now you don't want me. And I believed you that you would love me. First you ruin me, and then you do not want me.

NIKÍTA. You are saying all this to no purpose and in vain. You have been talking to my father, too. Do me a favour and go away.

MARÍNA. You know yourself that I have not loved anybody but you. I would not feel any worse for it, if you did not marry me. I am not guilty of anything before you, so why do you no longer love me? Why?

NIKÍTA. There is no sense in threshing out all this. Go away! O foolish women!

MARÍNA. I am not pained because you have deceived me, having promised to marry me, but because you no longer love me. And not so much because you no longer love me as because you have exchanged me for another, — I know for whom.

NIKÍTA (*angrily walks up to her*). What good is there in discussing matters with a woman? She won't listen to reason. Go away, I say, or something bad will come of it.

MARÍNA. Something bad? Well, you will beat me? Strike me! Don't turn your face away. O Nikíta!

NIKÍTA. It is not good. People might come upon us. What good is there in such useless talk?

MARÍNA. So this is the end. What has been is not to be. You command me to forget. Remember, Nikíta!

I had guarded my maiden honour like the apple of my eye; you have ruined me for nothing,—you have deceived me. You have not taken pity on an orphan (*weeping*); you have abandoned me. You have killed me, but I wish you no evil. God be with you! If you find some one better, you will forget me; if some one worse, you will think of me— You will think of me, Nikíta! Good-bye, if it has to be so. I have loved you so much! Good-bye for the last time. (*Wants to embrace him, and grasps his head.*)

NIKÍTA (*tearing himself away*). Oh, what a bother you are! If you do not go away, I will, and you can stay here.

MARÍNA (*crying aloud*). You are a beast! (*In the door.*) God will not give you happiness! (*Goes away weeping.*)

SCENE XX. Nikíta and Akulína.

AKULÍNA (*coming out of the storeroom*). You are a dog, Nikíta!

NIKÍTA. How so?

AKULÍNA. How she wept! (*Weeps.*)

NIKÍTA. What is the matter with you?

AKULÍNA. What? You have wronged her. You will wrong me the same way, you dog! (*Goes into the storeroom.*)

SCENE XXI. Nikíta alone.

NIKÍTA (*after a silence*). It is a muddle. I love women like sugar; but when you have sinned with them it is terrible!

*Curtain.*



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ OF ACT II.

PETER.

NIKÍTA.

ANÍSIA.

MATRÉNA.

AKULÍNA.

SPONSOR, a neighbour.

ANYÚTKA.

PEOPLE.

### ACT II.

*The scene represents a street and Peter's hut. On the left of the spectators is the hut in two parts, and the vestibule, with a porch in the middle; on the right are the gate and a corner of the yard. In the corner of the yard Anísia is beating hemp. Six months have passed since the first act.*

#### SCENE I. Anísia alone.

ANÍSIA (*stops working, and listens*). He is again growling. He must have climbed down from the oven.

#### SCENE II. Anísia and Akulína (*enter, with pails on a yoke*).

ANÍSIA. He is calling. Go and see what is the matter with him! Hear him howling!

AKULÍNA. What about you?

ANÍSIA. Go, I tell you! (*Akulína goes into the hut.*)

#### SCENE III. Anísia alone.

ANÍSIA. He is wearing me out: he will not tell me where the money is, and that is the end of it. The other day he was in the vestibule, so he must have hidden it

there. Now I do not know myself where. He is evidently afraid to part from it. It must be somewhere in the house. If only I could find it. He did not have it with him yesterday. He has completely worn me out.

SCENE IV. *Anísya and Akulína (who comes out, tying her kerchief on her head).*

ANÍSYA. Where are you going?

AKULÍNA. Where? He told me to call Aunt Márfa. "Go and call sister," says he. "I am dying," says he, "and I want to tell her something."

ANÍSYA (*aside*). He is calling his sister. Oh, my wretched head! He, no doubt, wants to give it to her. What am I to do? Oh! (*To Akulína.*) Don't go! Where are you going?

AKULÍNA. For aunty.

ANÍSYA. Don't go, I say. I will go myself, and you take the washing to the river. Else you will not get done before evening.

AKULÍNA. But he told me to go.

ANÍSYA. Go where I tell you. I told you I would go myself for Márfa. Take the shirts down from the fence.

AKULÍNA. The shirts? But I am afraid you won't go. He told me to.

ANÍSYA. I told you I would. Where is Anyútka?

AKULÍNA. Anyútka? She is watching the calves.

ANÍSYA. Send her here: the calves won't run away. (*Akulína takes up the washing and goes out.*)

SCENE V. *Anísya alone.*

ANÍSYA. If I don't go, he will curse me. If I do, he will give his sister the money. All my labours will be lost. I don't know what to do. My head is bursting. (*Continues to work.*)

SCENE VI. *Anísya and Matréna (entering with a staff and a bundle, as though from a journey).*

MATRÉNA. God bless you, my dear!

ANÍSYA (*looking around, throws down her work and claps her hands from joy*). I did not expect you, aunty. God has sent me a precious guest in proper time.

MATRÉNA. What is up?

ANÍSYA. I am all mixed up. It is just terrible!

MATRÉNA. I understand he is still alive.

ANÍSYA. Don't mention it. He is neither alive nor dead.

MATRÉNA. Has he given up his money to any one?

ANÍSYA. He has just sent for his sister Márfa. No doubt, he wants to talk to her about the money.

MATRÉNA. Of course. But has he not in the meantime given it to anybody?

ANÍSYA. No. I have been watching him like a hawk.

MATRÉNA. Where is it?

ANÍSYA. He will not tell, and I cannot find out. He is hiding it now in one place, now in another, and I can't do anything in Akulína's presence. She is a silly girl, but she keeps a sharp lookout. Oh, my head! I am all worn out.

MATRÉNA. Oh, my dear, if he gives the money away to any one but you, you will have to weep all your life. They will kick you out of the farm with nothing. You have worried your life away with an unpleasant man, and now you will have to go a-begging as a widow.

ANÍSYA. Don't say that, aunty! My heart is aching, and I do not know what to do, and there is nobody who can advise me. I told Nikíta about it, but he is afraid to take part in it. He told me yesterday that it was under the floor.

MATRÉNA. Well, did you go to see?

ANÍSYA. It is impossible,—he is there himself. I notice that he sometimes has it on his person, and sometimes hides it.

MATRÉNA. Remember, woman: once you make a mistake, you will not correct it in a lifetime. (*In a whisper.*) Well, did you give him the strong tea?

ANÍSYA. Oh! (*Wants to answer, but, seeing her neighbour, grows silent.*)

SCENE VII. The same and Sponsor (*who passes near the hut and listens to the voice calling in the house*).

SPONSOR (*to Anísya*). Friend! Anísya, oh, Anísya! Your man is calling!

ANÍSYA. He is just coughing, though it sounds as though he were calling. He is in a pretty bad shape.

SPONSOR (*walking up to Matréna*). Good day, mother! Whence does God bring you?

MATRÉNA. From the farm, my dear. I have come to see my son and to bring him some shirts. One naturally thinks of one's own child.

SPONSOR. Yes, that is so. (*To Anísya.*) Friend, I wanted to bleach the linen, but I thought it was too early yet. The people have not begun to bleach yet.

ANÍSYA. What is the use in hurrying?

MATRÉNA. Well, has he made his confession?

ANÍSYA. Certainly. The priest was here yesterday.

SPONSOR (*to Matréna*). I saw him yesterday, and I can't see what his soul is holding on to. He is so haggard. The other day, motherkin, he was almost dead, and they placed him under the images. They were already lamenting over him, and were getting ready to wash him.

ANÍSYA. He came to and got up again. Now he is walking about.

MATRÉNA. Well, are you going to give him the extreme unction?

ANÍSYA. People ask us to. If he is alive to-morrow, we will send for the priest.

SPONSOR. It must be hard for you, Anísya! The proverb says not in vain: Not he who is ailing is sick, but he who watches over the ailment.

ANÍSYA. If there were only an end to it!

SPONSOR. Of course. It is no small matter to see him dying for a year. He has tied your hands.

MATRÉNA. Bitter is a widow's lot. It is all right if she is young, but who will pity her in her old age? Old age is no joy. Look at me! I have walked but a short distance, and I am so tired that my feet are numb. Where is my son?

ANÍSYA. He is ploughing. Come in. We shall have the samovár ready, and you will ease your heart with some tea.

MATRÉNA (*sits down*). I am dreadfully tired, my dear ones. You must be sure and give him the extreme unction. People say it is good for the soul.

ANÍSYA. Yes, we shall send for him to-morrow.

MATRÉNA. It will be better so. We have had a wedding, my dear.

SPONSOR. What, a wedding in spring?

MATRÉNA. There is evidently good sense in the proverb: Night is too short for a poor man to marry. Semén Matvyéevich has married Marína.

ANÍSYA. So she has found her happiness!

SPONSOR. He is a widower, so she has married him for the children.

MATRÉNA. There are four of them. What decent girl would marry him? So he has taken her. She is happy. We drank a glass, — you see it was not strong liquor, — because they poured it out for me.

SPONSOR. I declare! Has he any means?

MATRÉNA. So far they are getting on well.

SPONSOR. That's so, who would want to marry a man

with children? Take, for example, our Mikháylo. He is a fine man, motherkin —

A PEASANT'S VOICE. Oh, Mávra, whither has the devil taken you? Go and drive in the cow. (*Neighbour exit.*)

SCENE VIII. Anísya and Matréná.

MATRÉNÁ (*while the neighbour is leaving, she speaks in an even voice*). She has been married sinfully, my dear; at least the silly woman will not be thinking about Nikíta. (*Suddenly changing her voice to a whisper.*) She is gone! Well, did you give him the tea?

ANÍSYA. Don't mention it. I wish he would die without it. He is not dying anyway, and I have taken a sin upon my soul. Oh, my head! Why did you give me those powders?

MATRÉNÁ. What about the powders? My dear, those are sleeping powders, and why not give them? There is no harm in them.

ANÍSYA. I am not speaking of the sleeping powders, but of the other, the whitish powders.

MATRÉNÁ. But those, my dear, are medicinal powders.

ANÍSYA (*sighing*). I know; but it makes me tremble. He has worn me out.

MATRÉNÁ. Well, how many times have you given it to him?

ANÍSYA. Twice.

MATRÉNÁ. Did they have any effect?

ANÍSYA. I put my lips to the tea, — it is slightly bitter. He drank it with the tea, and said: "I loathe the tea, too." And I said: "Everything tastes bitter to an ill man." But it made me shudder, aunty.

MATRÉNÁ. Don't think of it! It is not good to think of it.



ANÍSYA. I wish you had not given it to me, and had not tempted me to sin. It makes me shudder when I think of it. Why did you give them to me?

MATRÉNA. Don't say that, my dear! Christ be with you! Don't put it on me! Woman, it will not do to take it off a guilty head and put it on an innocent one. When it comes to anything, I shall stand aside. I sha'n't know a thing: I will kiss the cross that I have not given any powders and that I have not seen any, and that I have heard of no powders. Woman, think for yourself! We were talking the other day about you and how you are suffering. Your stepdaughter is a fool, and your husband is rotten, — a real curse. What will one not do with such a life?

ANÍSYA. I sha'n't deny it. Such a life will only make me hang myself or kill him. What life is this?

MATRÉNA. That's it. There is no time to lose. You must find the money, and give him the tea to drink.

ANÍSYA. Oh, my wretched head! I do not know myself what to do, and I feel so much afraid: I wish he would die by himself. I do not wish to take the sin upon me.

MATRÉNA (*angrily*). Why does he not reveal his money? Does he intend to take it with him, so that no one may get it? Is it proper? God forbid that such a lot of money should be lost for nothing. Is not this a sin? What is he doing? Is it not a shame to look at him?

ANÍSYA. I do not know. He has worn me out completely.

MATRÉNA. Why don't you know? The thing is clear enough. If you don't look out now, you will repent it all your life. He will give the money to his sister, and you will be left without any.

ANÍSYA. Oh, oh! He has sent for her, and I have to go and fetch her!

MATRÉNA. Wait awhile! First have the samovár ready. We will fill him with the tea, and then we will look him all over, — maybe we shall find the money.

ANÍSYA. Oh, oh! I am afraid something might happen.

MATRÉNA. What will happen? What are you wasting your time for? You are having your eyes all the time on the money, but it does not get into your hands. Go and do as I tell you!

ANÍSYA. So I will have the samovár made.

MATRÉNA. Go, my dear, and do things so as not to have cause for regret later. That's it! (*Anísya walks away; Matréná calls after her.*) By the way, don't tell Nikíta about it. He is silly about such things! God forbend that he should find out about the powders. God knows what he will do if he hears of it. He is compassionate: he could not kill a chicken even. Don't tell him! He will not consider it rightly. (*Stops in terror; Peter appears on the threshold.*)

SCENE IX. The same and Peter (*holding on to the wall, crawls out on the porch and calls in a weak voice*).

PETER. Will you ever hear me? Oh, oh! Anísya, who is here? (*Falls down on the bench.*)

ANÍSYA (*coming out from around the corner*). What did you come out for? Why did you not stay where you were?

PETER. Has the girl gone for Márfa? 'Tis hard — Oh, if death would only come!

ANÍSYA. She is busy: I sent her to the river. Give me a chance, and I will go there myself.

PETER. Send Anyútka. Where is she? Oh, 'tis hard! Oh, my death!

ANÍSYA. I have sent for her.

PETER. Oh, where is she?

ANÍSYA. Where is she? The paralysis take her!

PETER. Oh, I have no strength. It burns me within. I feel as though they were turning an auger within me. Why did you abandon me like a dog? There is nobody to give me a drink. Oh, send Anyútka to me!

ANÍSYA. Here she is. Anyútka, go to father!

SCENE X. The same *and* Anyútka (*running in*. Anísya *walks around the corner*).

PETER. Go, oh, to Aunt Márfa! Tell her, father wants her to come: he needs her.

ANYÚTKA. Well?

PETER. Wait. Tell her I need her at once. Tell her I am dying. Oh, oh!

ANYÚTKA. I will take my kerchief and will go there at once. (*Exit running.*)

SCENE XI. Peter, Anísya, *and* Matréna.

MATRÉNA (*winking*). Well, woman, remember your business! Go into the hut and hunt everywhere! Hunt, as a dog hunts for fleas! Turn everything upside down, and I will go through him here at once.

ANÍSYA (*to Matréna*). I have more courage when you are around. (*Walks up to the porch. To Peter.*) Don't you want the samovár? Aunt Matréna has come to see her son, — so you drink tea with her.

PETER. All right, have it made! (*Anísya goes into the vestibule.*)

SCENE XII. Peter *and* Matréna (*walking over to the porch*).

PETER. Good day!

MATRÉNA. Good day, benefactor! Good day, my dear! You are evidently sick. My old man is very sorry for

you. He told me to go and find out how you were. He sent his regards. (*Bows again.*)

PETER. I am dying.

MATRÉNA. As I look at you, Ignátych, I see that suffering is not abroad in the woods, but keeping close to people. You are thin, my dear, very thin, as I see. Sickness does not make one look better, that is evident.

PETER. My death has come.

MATRÉNA. Well, Peter Ignátych, that is God's will. You have confessed, and you will receive the extreme unction, if God grants it. You have a clever wife, thank God, and you will be buried in honour, and mass will be said for you. And my son will in the meantime look after the house as much as he can.

PETER. There is no one to whom I can give an order! The woman is not reliable, and busies herself with foolish things. I know all — I know — The girl is silly and young. I have fixed all this house, but there is no one to take care of it. It is a pity. (*Groans.*)

MATRÉNA. If there is anything about money matters, you can order others —

PETER (*to Anísya in the vestibule*). Has Anyútka gone?

MATRÉNA (*aside*). I declare, he has not forgotten it.

ANÍSYA (*in the vestibule*). She has gone long ago. Go into the house! I will take you in.

PETER. Let me sit here for the last time! The air is close within. It is hard for me — Oh, I am all burning up inside — If death would only come!

MATRÉNA. If God does not take away the soul, it will not fly away by itself. God has power over life and death, Peter Ignátych. You can't foresee death. There are cases when a man gets up again. There was once a man in our village, who was almost dead —

PETER. No. I feel that I am going to die to-day. (*Leans back and closes his eyes.*)

SCENE XIII. *The same and Anísya.*

ANÍSYA (*enter*). Well, will you go in, or not? I am tired waiting for you. Peter, oh, Peter!

MATRÉNA (*walks away and beckons with her finger to Anísya*). Well?

ANÍSYA (*walks down from the porch, to Matréna*). Nothing.

MATRÉNA. Have you looked everywhere? Under the floor?

ANÍSYA. Nothing there, either. Maybe in the loft. He was climbing there yesterday.

MATRÉNA. Look for it, look for it more carefully than ever, as though licking it clean with your tongue. I see he will die to-day anyway: his nails are blue, and his face is ashen gray. Is the samovár ready?

ANÍSYA. It will boil in a minute.

SCENE XIV. *The same and Nikíta (coming from the other side. If possible he rides on a horse to the gate. He does not see Peter).*

NIKÍTA (*to his mother*). Good day, mother! Are you all well at home?

MATRÉNA. Thank God we are alive and have something to eat.

NIKÍTA. Well, how is the master?

MATRÉNA. Softly, — he is sitting there. (*Points to the porch.*)

NIKÍTA. Well, let him sit! What do I care?

PETER (*opening his eyes*). Nikíta, oh, Nikíta, come here! (*Nikíta walks over to him. Anísya whispers to Matréna.*)

PETER. Why did you come back so soon?

NIKÍTA. I have done the ploughing.

PETER. Have you ploughed up the strip back of the bridge?

NIKÍTA. It is too far to go there.

PETER. Too far? It is farther from the house. You will have to go there especially, — so you might have done it at once. (*Anísya, standing a distance off, is listening.*)

MATRÉNA (*coming up*). Oh, son, why don't you try to do better for your master? Your master is ill, and is depending on you; you ought to exert yourself for him as for a father. Why don't you serve him as I told you to?

PETER. So you had better — oh! — dig up the potatoes, and the women — oh! — will pick them over.

ANÍSYA (*aside*). So he wants me to go, too. He wants to send us all away, because he has the money with him. He wants to hide it somewhere.

PETER. Because — oh! — it will soon be time to set them out, and they will be rotten. Oh, I have no more strength. (*Rises.*)

MATRÉNA (*runs up on the porch and supports Peter*). Shall I take you to the house?

PETER. Yes. (*Stops.*) Nikíta!

NIKÍTA (*angrily*). What else is it?

PETER. I won't see you again — I shall die to-day — Forgive me, for Christ's sake, forgive me if I have sinned before you — I have sinned in deeds and words — Yes, I have. Forgive me.

NIKÍTA. There is nothing to forgive. I am sinful myself.

MATRÉNA. O son, show more feeling!

PETER. Forgive me, for Christ's sake — (*Weeps.*)

NIKÍTA (*snuffling*). God will forgive you, Uncle Peter. I have not been offended by you. I have not been wronged by you. You forgive me, for I may be more sinful than you. (*Weeps. Peter goes away moaning. Matréná supports him.*)



SCENE XV. *Nikíta and Anísya.*

ANÍSya. Oh, my wretched head! There is something behind his words. (*Walks over to Nikíta.*) You said that the money was under the floor, but I did not find it there.

NIKÍTA (*weeping, does not answer*). I have never been wronged by him. See what I have done to him!

ANÍSya. Stop that. Where is the money?

NIKÍTA (*angrily*). Who knows? Look for it yourself!

ANÍSya. You are dreadfully compassionate.

NIKÍTA. I am sorry for him. I am so sorry. How he wept! Oh!

ANÍSya. I declare, you are soft-hearted! A good person you have found to pity! He has been scolding you and even now he ordered me to drive you away from the farm. You had better pity me.

NIKÍTA. What am I to pity you for?

ANÍSya. He will hide the money, and then die.

NIKÍTA. No, he won't.

ANÍSya. O Nikíta! He has sent for his sister, — he wants to give it to her. It will be our misfortune. How shall we live if he gives the money away? They will send me away from the farm. You ought to help me in this. Did you not tell me that he climbed into the loft yesterday?

NIKÍTA. I saw him coming out of it; but I do not know where he put the money.

ANÍSya. Oh, my head! I will go and look there. (*Nikíta walks away.*)

SCENE XVI. *The same and Matréna (comes out of the hut. Walks down the steps to Anísya and Nikíta, in a whisper).*

MATRÉNA. Don't go anywhere! He has the money on his person. He has it on his baptismal cross.

ANÍSYA. Oh, my wretched head!

MATRÉNA. If you miss the opportunity now, you might as well look for it under the eagle's right wing. His sister will come, and then good-bye.

ANÍSYA. If she comes, he will give it to her. What am I to do? Oh, my head!

MATRÉNA. What are you to do? Look here: the samovár is boiling now, so you go and fix the tea and pour in (*in a whisper*) the whole lot of it. He will drink a cup, and then you take it away. Don't be afraid! He will not tell.

ANÍSYA. It makes me tremble!

MATRÉNA. Don't discuss now. Do it right away, while I am on the lookout for his sister. Don't make a blunder! Take the money and bring it here, and Nikíta will hide it!

ANÍSYA. Oh, my head! How am I to begin it?

MATRÉNA. I tell you not to discuss now. Do as I tell you, Nikíta!

NIKÍTA. What?

MATRÉNA. You stay here! Sit down on the mound for awhile,—you will be needed.

NIKÍTA (*waving his hand*). What these women will think out! They will positively ruin me! Go to! I will go and dig out the potatoes.

MATRÉNA (*takes his hand*). I tell you to stay!

SCENE XVII. The same and Anyútka (*enter*).

ANÍSYA. Well?

ANYÚTKA. She was in her daughter's garden. She will be here at once.

ANÍSYA. What shall we do if she comes?

MATRÉNA (*to Anísya*). You will have plenty of time. Do as I tell you!

ANÍSYA. I do not know what. I know nothing,—

everything is mixed in my head. Anyútka! Go, darling, to the calves! They may have run away. Oh, I won't have the courage.

MATRÉNA. Go! The samovár is running over by this time.

ANÍSYA. Oh, my wretched head! (*Exit.*)

SCENE XVIII. *Matréna and Nikíta.*

MATRÉNA (*goes up to her son*). Yes, my son! (*Sits down on the mound, near him.*) Your affair, too, has to be considered. It must not be left out.

NIKÍTA. What affair?

MATRÉNA. Namely, how you are to get on in the world.

NIKÍTA. How to get on in the world? I shall live just as other people do.

MATRÉNA. The old man is going to die to-day.

NIKÍTA. If he does, the kingdom of heaven be his. What is that to me?

MATRÉNA (*looking all the time at the porch while speaking*). Oh, my son! A living person thinks of living things. My dear, it takes much thinking here. I have been in all kinds of places, attending to your affairs; I have worn out my legs running errands for you. Don't forget me for it!

NIKÍTA. What is it you attended to?

MATRÉNA. To your affair, to your fate. If I did not attend to it in time, nothing would come of it. You know Iván Moséich? I go to see him now and then. The other day I attended to some business of his; I stayed there awhile and chatted with him. "Explain to me, Iván Moséich," says I, "a certain matter. For example," says I, "there is a widower, and he has taken unto himself a second wife, and, let us say, he has children by both wives. Suppose now," says I, "the man dies; can another man," says I, "step in and marry the widow? Can

he," says I, "marry off the daughters and himself remain on the farm?" "He can," says he, "only," says he, "it will take much trouble and money," says he; "it can be done,—but without money," says he, "there is no use trying."

NIKÍTA (*laughing*). Of course, if you give them money. Everybody wants money.

MATRÉNA. Well, my dear. I told him the whole affair. "In the first place," says he, "your son must inscribe himself in that village; for this you need money to treat the old men to drinks. Then they will put down their signatures. Everything," says he, "has to be done cautiously." Look here! (*Takes out a paper from her kerchief.*) He has written up a paper. Read it, for you know how to read. (*Nikíta reads it.*)

NIKÍTA. This paper is an official document. There is no great wisdom in it.

MATRÉNA. Listen to what Iván Moséich has told me. "Above everything else," says he, "let him not miss the money. If she does not get the money," says he, "they will not let her get a son-in-law. Money," says he, "is the chief thing." So look out! My son, the business will soon begin.

NIKÍTA. What do I care? It is her money, so let her trouble herself about it.

MATRÉNA. My son, you do not judge rightly. Can a woman consider rightly? Suppose even she takes the money, how is she to dispose of it? That is not a woman's business, but a man's. You can hide it, and all such things. You have more sense in matters like this.

NIKÍTA. The reasoning of you women is not correct!

MATRÉNA. Why not correct? You only take the money. Then the woman will be in your hands. If, by any chance, she should get saucy, or something of that kind, you can pull in the reins.

NIKÍTA. Go to! I will go away.

SCENE XIX. Nikíta, Matréná, and Anísya (*pale. Running toward Matréná from the hut around the corner*).

ANÍSYA. It was on his person. Here it is. (*Shows it under her apron.*)

MATRÉNÁ. Give it to Nikíta! He will hide it. Nikíta, take it and put it away somewhere!

NIKÍTA. All right! Let me have it!

ANÍSYA. Oh, my head! I will put it away myself! (*Walks over toward the gate.*)

MATRÉNÁ (*seizing her hand*). Where are you going? They will find it out, and his sister is coming. Give it to him: he knows what to do with it. Senseless woman!

ANÍSYA (*stops in indecision*). Oh, my head!

NIKÍTA. Well, let me have it! I will put it away safely.

ANÍSYA. Where will you put it?

NIKÍTA. Are you afraid? (*Laughs.*)

SCENE XX. The same and Akulína (*coming with the washing*).

ANÍSYA. Oh, my wretched head! (*Gives up the money.*) Nikíta, look out!

NIKÍTA. What are you afraid of? I will put it away so that I can't find it myself. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XXI. Matréná, Anísya, and Akulína.

ANÍSYA (*standing in fright*). Oh, oh, when he —

MATRÉNÁ. Well, is he dead?

ANÍSYA. Yes, I think he is. He did not stir when I took it from him.

MATRÉNÁ. Go into the hut! Akulína is coming.

ANÍSYA. I have sinned, and he with the money —

MATRÉNA. That will do. Go into the house! Márfa is coming.

ANÍSYA. I have trusted him. What will happen now? (*Exit.*)

SCENE XXII. Márfa, Akulína, and Matréna.

MÁRFA (*coming from one side, and Akulína from the other. To Akulína*). I should have come long ago, but I was at my daughter's. Well, how is the old man? Is he going to die?

AKULÍNA (*taking off the washing*). I don't know. I was at the river.

MÁRFA (*pointing to Matréna*). Who is that?

MATRÉNA. I am from Zúev. I am Nikíta's mother, from Zúev, my friend. Good day! Your brother has been asking for you. He came out himself. "Send for my sister," says he, "because," says he — Oh! I am afraid he may be dead by this time.

SCENE XXIII. The same and Anísya (*running out of the house with a cry. Takes hold of a post and moans*).

ANÍSYA. Oh, oh! To whom has he left me? Oh, oh, oh, to whom has he abandoned me? Oh, oh, oh, a wretched widow — for ever and ever — he has closed his clear eyes —

SCENE XXIV. The same and friend. (*The friend and Matréna take her under her arms. Akulína and Márfa go into the house. People gathering.*)

A VOICE FROM THE THRONG. Call for old women to fix things.

MATRÉNA (*rolling up her sleeves*). Is there any water in the iron pot? I think the samovár has not been emptied yet. I will work myself.

*Curtain.*



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ OF ACT III.

AKÍM.	ANYÚTKA.
NIKÍTA.	MÍTRICH, an old hired hand,
AKULÍNA.	an ex-soldier.
ANÍSIA.	ANÍSIA'S SPONSOR.

### ACT III.

*Peter's hut. Winter. Nine months have passed since the Second Act. Anísya, in every-day attire, working at the loom. Anyútka on the oven. Mítrich, the hired hand.*

#### SCENE I.

MÍTRICH (*walks in slowly. Takes off his coat*). O Lord, be merciful! Has the master returned?

ANÍSIA. What?

MÍTRICH. Has Nikíta come back from town?

ANÍSIA. No.

MÍTRICH. He is evidently on a spree. O Lord!

ANÍSIA. Have you done your work on the threshing-floor?

MÍTRICH. Of course. I have fixed everything as is proper, and have covered it with straw. I don't like to do things by halves. O Lord! Merciful St. Nicholas! (*Picking his callosities.*) It is time for him to be back.

ANÍSIA. Why should he be in a hurry? He has money, so, I suppose, he is celebrating with a girl —

MÍTRICH. He has money, — then why not celebrate? What did Akulína go to town for?

ANÍSIA. You ask her why the unclean one has taken her there.

MÍTRICH. Why to town? In town there is much of everything if you only have the means. O Lord!

ANYÚTKA. I have heard it myself. "I will buy you a shawl," says he, "I will," truly, says he. "You shall pick it out yourself," says he. And she dressed herself up: she put on the plush sleeveless coat and the French kerchief.

ANÍSIA. It is true: a girl's chastity goes as far as the threshold. Let her step across it, and she forgets everything. Shameless one!

MÍTRICH. Well, what is there to be ashamed of? Celebrate as long as there is any money! O Lord! Is it too early for supper? (*Anísya keeps silent.*) In the meantime I will warm myself. (*Climbs on the oven.*) O Lord! Most Holy Mother of God! St. Nicholas!

## SCENE II. The same and Sponsor.

SPONSOR (*enter*). Your man has not come back yet?

ANÍSIA. No.

SPONSOR. It is time he should have. I wonder whether he has not gone to our inn. Sister Fékla told me that a number of sleighs from town were standing there.

ANÍSIA. Anyútka, O Anyútka

ANYÚTKA. What?

ANÍSIA. Run down, Anyútka, to the inn, and see whether he is not there, and drunk.

ANYÚTKA (*jumping down from the oven, and putting on her coat*). Right away!

SPONSOR. Has he taken Akulína with him?

ANÍSIA. For what else would he go there? She is the cause of it all. He said that he had to go to the bank to get some money, but it is only she who is taking him to town.

SPONSOR (*shaking her head*). What is the use of talking about it? (*Silence.*)

ANYÚTKA (*at the door*). If he is there, what shall I say to him?

ANÍSYA. Just find out whether he is there.

ANYÚTKA. All right, I'll go quick. (*Exit.*)

SCENE III. Anísya, Mítrich, and Sponsor. (*Long silence.*)

MÍTRICH (*bellowing*). O Lord! Holy St. Nicholas!

SPONSOR (*shuddering*). Oh, how he has frightened me! Who is that?

ANÍSYA. Mítrich, the hired hand.

SPONSOR. Oh, he has given me a fright! I had forgotten about him. I have heard that somebody has been asking for Akulína's hand.

ANÍSYA (*coming out from behind the loom and seating herself at the table*). The Dyédlov people hinted about it; but evidently they heard something. They hinted about it, and then they kept silent,—and that was the end of it. Who should want her?

SPONSOR. What about the Lizúnovs from Zúev?

ANÍSYA. They made inquiries, but the inquiries did not come to anything. He did not even receive them.

SPONSOR. You ought to get her married.

ANÍSYA. I should say I ought to. I should like to get her away from the farm, but I do not know how to do it. He does not want to let her go, nor does she want to go herself. You see, he has not yet had enough of his beauty.

SPONSOR. Oh, what sins! What he is up to! And he is her stepfather.

ANÍSYA. Oh, friend! They have cheated and deceived me so cleverly! In my foolishness I did not notice anything and did not think about it, and so I married him.

I did not suspect a thing, but they had an understanding long before.

SPONSOR. Oh, oh, what an affair!

ANÍSYA. The farther it went, the more they began to hide it from me. Ah, friend, I am tired, I am tired of my life. It would be different if I did not love him!

SPONSOR. Yes, it is bad.

ANÍSYA. It pains me, friend, to be wronged by him in such a manner. Oh, it pains me!

SPONSOR. They say that he has become rough in his ways.

ANÍSYA. Yes, that is so. Formerly he used to be peaceful when he drank; he used to strike me before, but he loved me; now, when he fills himself up with drink, he rushes against me and wants to trample upon me. The other day he stuck his hands into my braids, and I had the hardest time to get away from him. And the girl is worse than a snake. I wonder how the earth can bring forth such evil ones!

SPONSOR. Oh, oh, oh, friend! You look pretty well worn out! It is hard to bear it all. You picked him up when he was a beggar, and this is the way he treats you. Shall you not try to stop him?

ANÍSYA. Oh, my dear friend! What shall I do with my heart? My former husband was very severe, but I twisted him as I wanted; I cannot do so with this one. The moment I see him my heart softens. I have no courage against him: I walk around before him like a wet chicken.

SPONSOR. Oh, oh, friend! You must be bewitched. They say Matréna does such things. It must be she who has done it.

ANÍSYA. I think so myself, my friend. I sometimes feel so angry, I should like to tear him to pieces; but the moment I see him my heart does not allow me to raise my hands against him.

SPONSOR. There is no doubt, you are bewitched. It

does not take long to spoil a person by witchcraft. It makes me feel badly to see what has become of you.

ANÍSYA. My legs are as thin as sticks. But look at silly Akulína! She is a slattern and a good-for-nothing, but just look at her! Where did it all come from? He has dressed her up. She has spread out and is as bloated as a bladder on the water. Although she is silly, she has got it into her head to say: "I," says she, "am the mistress here. The house is mine. Father wanted me to marry him." And oh, how mean she is! God save us from her! When she gets angry she tears the straw down from the roof.

SPONSOR. Oh, oh, friend, what a life you lead! And people envy you! They say you are rich; but evidently, my dear, tears flow also over gold.

ANÍSYA. What is there to envy? The wealth will all pass away like dust. He squanders the money terribly.

SPONSOR. But how is it, my friend, you have let it happen? The money is yours.

ANÍSYA. If you only knew it all! I made a little blunder.

SPONSOR. If I were in your place, my friend, I should go to some great officer. The money is yours. How can he squander it? There are no such laws.

ANÍSYA. They pay no attention to this nowadays.

SPONSOR. Oh, friend, you look pretty weak!

ANÍSYA. Yes, my dear, I am weak, very weak. He has ruined me. I do not know what to do. Oh, oh, my wretched head!

SPONSOR. Somebody is coming, I think. (*Listens. The door opens. Enter Akím.*)

#### SCENE IV. The same and Akím.

AKÍM (*crosses himself. Shakes off the mud from his shoes and takes off his wraps*). Peace be upon this house! How are you? Good day, aunty.

ANÍSYA. Good day, father! Are you from the farm?

AKÍM. I thought, so to speak, I would come down to see my son, so to speak. I started late, after dinner, so to speak; as I walked, it was snowing, and it was hard to walk, so to speak, and so I am late. Is my son at home? Is he at home?

ANÍSYA. No. He is in town.

AKÍM (*sits down on the bench*). I have some business, so to speak, some business with him. I told him the other day, so to speak, about my need, so to speak; the horse has died, so to speak. I must get me another horse, so to speak, any kind of a horse, so to speak. So I have come, so to speak.

ANÍSYA. Nikíta told me about it. You will talk with him when he comes home. (*Walks toward the oven.*) You eat supper, and by that time he will be here. Mítrich, oh, Mítrich, come to supper!

MÍTRICH. O Lord, merciful St. Nicholas!

ANÍSYA. Come to supper!

SPONSOR. I will go now. Good-bye! (*Exit.*)

#### SCENE V. Akím, Anísya, and Mítrich.

MÍTRICH (*climbing down*). I do not know how I came to fall asleep. O Lord, St. Nicholas! Good evening, Uncle Akím!

AKÍM. Oh, Mítrich! What are you doing here, so to speak?—

MÍTRICH. I am working for Nikíta, your son.

AKÍM. I say! So you are working for my son, so to speak? I say!

MÍTRICH. I was staying with a merchant in town, but I took to drinking there; so I came back to the village. I have no place to go to, so I hired out at your son's. (*Yawning.*) O Lord!

AKÍM. Well, so to speak, how is Nikíta doing, so to



speak? He must be doing well, so to speak, to be able, so to speak, to hire a man.

MÍTRICH. He has money, then why should he —

AKÍM. That is all in vain, so to speak, all in vain. In vain, I say. Looseness, so to speak.

ANÍSIA. Yes, he is spoilt, dreadfully spoilt.

AKÍM. That's it! I was thinking, so to speak, how to do it better, but he is doing it worse, so to speak. A man gets spoilt by wealth, so to speak, — he does.

MÍTRICH. Even a dog maddens from fat, — then why should a man not spoil from fat? You ought to have seen me going on a spree when I had money! I drank for three weeks without stopping. I gave my last trousers for drinks. When I did not have anything left I stopped. Now I have sworn off. Bother!

AKÍM. And your old woman, so to speak, where is she?

MÍTRICH. The old woman, my friend, is well fixed. She sits now in one inn in town, now in another. She looks fine: one eye is torn out, the other is black, and her mouth is all awry. She is never sober, — pea-pie choke her!

AKÍM. Oh, oh! How is that?

MÍTRICH. Where else is there a place for a soldier's wife? This is her proper occupation. (*Silence.*)

AKÍM (*to Anísia*). Has Nikíta taken anything to town? Has he, so to speak, taken anything to sell?

ANÍSIA (*setting the table and passing the food*). He went with nothing. He went to fetch some money from the bank.

AKÍM (*eating*). What do you want to do with the money? Do you want to use it for something, so to speak?

ANÍSIA. No, we do not touch it. Only twenty or thirty roubles; we had to take them out.

AKÍM. Had to take them? Why should you take the money, so to speak? You take it to-day, and you take it

to-morrow, so to speak, and then you use it all up, so to speak.

ANÍSYA. This is above the capital. The money is not touched.

AKÍM. Not touched? How not touched? You take it, and it is, so to speak, not touched? You pour flour, so to speak, into a box, so to speak, or into the granary, and take the flour out again,—well, will it remain untouched, so to speak? There is something wrong, they are cheating you, so to speak. You had better find out, or they will cheat you. How can it be untouched? You are taking away, so to speak,—and it is not touched!

ANÍSYA. I don't know about that. Iván Moséich advised us to do it. "Put the money into the bank," says he, "then the money will be safe, and you will get interest on it."

MÍTRICH (*through eating*). That is correct. I used to live at the house of a merchant: he did it the same way. All one has to do is to put the money in, and then lie on the oven and receive money.

AKÍM. You are saying some wonderful things, so to speak. How is one to receive it, so to speak? You receive it, so to speak, and from whom do they get the money, so to speak?

ANÍSYA. The bank gives us the money.

MÍTRICH. What is that? A woman can't make it out. Look here! I will explain it to you. Listen! Let us suppose, for example, you have money, and I, for example, have my land lying fallow; it is spring, and I have no seed; or I have to pay the taxes. So I come to you, and say: "Akím, give me ten roubles! I will have the harvest in by St. Mary's Intercession and then I will give it back to you, with a tithe for the accommodation." You, for example, see that I can be flayed, having a horse or a cow, so you say: "Give me two or three roubles for

the accommodation." The noose is around my neck, and I cannot get along without it. "Very well," says I, "I will take the ten roubles." In the fall I sell some things, and I bring you the money, and you skin me in addition for three roubles.

AKÍM. But this is, so to speak, a wrong done to a peasant. If one forgets God, so to speak, it is not good.

MÍTRICH. Wait a minute! She will soon strike the same thing. So remember what you have done: you have fleeced me, so to speak, and Anísya, for example, has some money which is lying idle. She has no place to put it in and, being a woman, does not know what to do with it. So she comes to you: "Can't I," says she, "make some use of my money?" "Yes, you can," you say. And so you wait. Next summer I come to you once more. "Give me another ten roubles," says I, "and I will pay you for the accommodation." So you watch me to see whether my hide has not been turned yet, whether I can be flayed again, and if I can, you give me Anísya's money. But if I have not a blessed thing, and nothing to eat, you make your calculations, seeing that I cannot be skinned, and you say: "God be with you, my brother!" and you look out for another man to whom to give Anísya's money, and whom you can flay. Now this is called a bank. So it keeps going around. It is a very clever thing, my friend.

AKÍM (*excitedly*). What is this? This is a nastiness, so to speak. If a peasant, so to speak, were to do it, the peasants would regard it as a sin, so to speak. This is not according to the Law, not according to the Law, so to speak. It is bad. How can the learned men, so to speak —

MÍTRICH. This, my friend, is their favourite occupation. You consider this: If there is one who is not very clever, or a woman, who has money and does not know what to do with it, they take it to a bank, and the bank

snatches it up, — pea-pie choke them, — and skins the people with that money. It's a clever thing.

AKÍM (*sighing*). As I look at it, so to speak, there is trouble without money, so to speak, and with money the trouble is double, so to speak. God has commanded to work. But you put the money in the bank, so to speak, and lie down to sleep, and the money will feed you, so to speak, while you are lying. This is bad, — not according to the Law, so to speak.

MÍTRICH. Not according to the Law? The Law does not trouble people nowadays, my friend. All they think about is how to clean out a fellow. That's what!

AKÍM (*sighing*). The time is coming near, so to speak. I have seen water-closets, so to speak, in the city. What have they come to? They are nice and clean, so to speak, like an inn. What does it all lead to, what does it lead to? Oh, they have forgotten God! They have forgotten Him, so to speak. We have forgotten God, yes, we have forgotten Him. Thank you, my dear, I have had enough, — I am satisfied. (*Comes out from behind the table. Mítrich climbs upon the oven.*)

ANÍSYA (*taking away the dishes, and eating*). Father might talk to him, but I am ashamed to mention it to him.

AKÍM. What?

ANÍSYA. Nothing, I was just speaking to myself.

SCENE VI. The same and Anyútka (*enter*).

AKÍM. Ah, clever girl! Still flying around? You are frozen, I suppose.

ANYÚTKA. I am dreadfully frozen. Good evening, grandfather!

ANÍSYA. Well? Is he there?

ANYÚTKA. No. Andrián, who has come back from town, says that he is still in town, in an inn. Father, he says, is dead drunk.

ANÍSYA. Do you want to eat? Here, take it!

ANYÚTKA (*goes to the oven*). Oh, it is so cold! My hands are numb. (*Akím takes off his coat and shoes. Anísya washes the dishes.*)

ANÍSYA. Father!

AKÍM. What do you wish?

ANÍSYA. Is Marína living well?

AKÍM. Not bad. She is getting along. She is a clever woman, so to speak, and peaceable, and is getting on well, so to speak. She is a good worker, so to speak, and tries hard, and, so to speak, is obedient. She is all right, so to speak.

ANÍSYA. They say that a relative of Marína's husband wanted to marry our Akulína. Haven't you heard anything about it?

AKÍM. The Mirónovs? The women were saying something about it. I did not pay any attention to it, so to speak. I do not know for sure, so to speak. The women were saying something. But I do not remember, I do not remember it, so to speak. Well, the Mirónovs are good peasants, so to speak.

ANÍSYA. I wish so much I could get her married at once.

AKÍM. What is it?

ANYÚTKA (*listening*). They have come.

ANÍSYA. Keep out of their way! (*Continues to wash the spoons, without turning her head.*)

#### SCENE VII. The same and Nikíta.

NIKÍTA. Anísya, my wife, who has come? (*Anísya looks around and, turning away, keeps silent.*)

NIKÍTA (*angrily*). Who has come? Have you forgotten?

ANÍSYA. Stop blustering! Go!

NIKÍTA (*more angrily still*). Who has come?

ANÍSYA (*walks over to him and takes hold of his hand*). Well, my husband has come. Go into the room.

NIKÍTA (*holding back*). That's it, your husband. What is his name? Say it correctly!

ANÍSYA. Well, Nikíta.

NIKÍTA. That's it! You boor, call me by my patronymic!

ANÍSYA. Akímych. Well?

NIKÍTA (*still at the door*). That's it. No, you tell my family name!

ANÍSYA (*laughing, and pulling him by his hand*). Chilíkin. How angry you look!

NIKÍTA. That's it. (*Holding on to the door-post*). No, you tell me what foot Chilíkin puts first as he steps into the room.

ANÍSYA. That will do! The room is getting cold.

NIKÍTA. Tell me what foot. You must tell me by all means.

ANÍSYA (*aside*). He'll tire me out. Well, the left. Come now.

NIKÍTA. That's it.

ANÍSYA. See who is in the room!

NIKÍTA. My father? Well, I am not ashamed of my father. I can show the proper respect to my father. Good evening, father! (*Bows to him and gives him his hand.*) My respects to you!

AKÍM (*not answering him*). The liquor, the liquor, so to speak, is doing it. It is bad.

NIKÍTA. The liquor? Because I have drunk some? I am quite guilty of this. I have taken a drink with a friend.

ANÍSYA. Go and lie down!

NIKÍTA. Wife, where am I standing? Speak!

ANÍSYA. Now, stop it! Go and lie down!

NIKÍTA. I will have a samovár with father. Fix the samovár! Akulína, come in!



SCENE VIII. The same *and* Akulína.

AKULÍNA (*dressed up. Walks with her purchases up to Nikíta*). How you scatter things! Where is the harness?

NIKÍTA. The harness? The harness is there. Oh, Mítrich, where are you? Are you asleep? Go and put the horse up!

AKÍM (*not seeing Akulína and looking at his son*). What are you doing? The old man is, so to speak, worn out: he has been threshing, and you are all bloated, so to speak. "Put the horse up!" Pshaw, how bad that is!

MÍTRICH (*climbs down from the oven and puts on his felt boots*). O merciful Lord! Is the horse in the yard? I suppose you have worn it out! Thunder, he is sopped in liquor,—through and through. O Lord! St. Nicholas! (*Puts on the fur coat and exit*.)

NIKÍTA (*sitting down*). Forgive me, father! I have drunk some, that is so; but what is to be done? A chicken drinks, too. Am I not right? So forgive me! As to Mítrich,—he will not be offended, he will put the horse up.

ANÍSIA. Do you really want the samovár?

NIKÍTA. Make it! Father has come, and I want to drink tea with him and talk. (*To Akulína*.) Have you taken out all the purchases?

AKULÍNA. The purchases? I took out what belongs to me; the rest are in the sleigh. Take this; it does not belong to me. (*Throws a roll on the table, and puts the purchases into a coffer. Anyútka watches Akulína putting away things. Akím does not look at his son, and puts away his leg-rags and the bast shoes on the oven*.)

ANÍSIA (*exit with the samovár*). The coffer is full, but he has bought more things.

## SCENE IX. Akím, Akulína, Anyútka, and Nikíta.

NIKÍTA (*tries to look sober*). Father, don't be angry with me! You think that I am drunk. I can do everything: I can drink without losing my senses. I can talk with you, father, as though nothing had happened. I remember everything. You told me about the money: you said that the horse has died, — I remember it all. That can be done. It is all in our hands. If an immense sum were asked I would have to put it off for some time, but this I can do. Here it is.

AKÍM (*still busy with his rags*). Oh, my son, a spring path is, so to speak, not a road —

NIKÍTA. What do you mean by it? You can't talk well with a drunken man. Never mind! We will have some tea together. I can do everything, positively I can.

AKÍM (*shaking his head*). Oh, oh, oh!

NIKÍTA. Here is the money. (*Puts his hand into his pocket, gets the pocketbook, flourishes the money and pulls out a ten-rouble bill.*) Take this for your horse! Take it for the horse! I cannot forget a father. I will positively not abandon you. Here, take it! I do not begrudge you the money. (*Comes up and pushes the money into Akím's hand, but Akím does not want to take it.*) Take it, I say! I give it with pleasure.

AKÍM. I cannot take it, so to speak. I cannot speak with you, so to speak, because there is no decency about you, so to speak.

NIKÍTA. I will not let you go. Take it! (*Pushes the money into Akím's hand.*)

## SCENE X. The same and Anísya.

ANÍSya (*enters and stops*). You had better take it, for he will give you no rest.

AKÍM (*takes it, shaking his head*). Oh, the liquor! You are not a man, so to speak —

NIKÍTA. This is better. If you give it back to me it will be well; if not, God be with you! That's my way! (*Seeing Akulína.*) Akulína, show your presents!

AKULÍNA. What?

NIKÍTA. Show your presents!

AKULÍNA. The presents? What is the use of showing them? I have put them away.

NIKÍTA. Get them out, I say! Anyútka likes to see them. Show them, I say, to Anyútka! Open up the shawl! Give it to me!

AKÍM. Oh, it makes me feel bad to look at him. (*Climbing on the oven.*)

AKULÍNA (*taking out her things and putting them on the table*). Here they are. What is there to look at?

ANYÚTKA. Oh, how nice they are! This is not worse than Stepanídina's.

AKULÍNA. Stepanídina's? Stepanídina's does not come up to this. (*Becoming more animated and opening the shawl.*) Look at it! See what quality it is: it is of French make.

ANYÚTKA. And what pretty chintz! Mashútka has one like it, only hers is lighter, on an azure field. This one is so nice!

NIKÍTA. That's it. (*Anísya goes angrily into the storeroom and returns with the samovár pipe and tablecloth, and walks over to the table.*)

ANÍSYA. How you have scattered things here!

NIKÍTA. Look here!

ANÍSYA. What am I to look at? I have seen such things before. Take them away! (*Brushes the shawl down on the floor.*)

AKULÍNA. Don't throw about things like that! Throw your own things! (*Picks it up.*)

NIKÍTA. Anísya, look out!

ANÍSYA. What am I to look out for?

NIKÍTA. You think I have forgotten you. Look here! (*Shows the roll and sits down upon it.*) It is a present for you. Only you have to earn it. Woman, where am I sitting?

ANÍSYA. Stop your nonsense! I am not afraid of you. On whose money are you celebrating, and buying presents for your hussy? On mine.

AKULÍNA. Yes, yours! You wanted to steal it, but you did not succeed. Get away! (*Wants to pass by and pushes her.*)

ANÍSYA. Don't push that way! I will give you a push!

AKULÍNA. You will? Try it! (*Pushes against her.*)

NIKÍTA. Women, women, stop! (*Stands between them.*)

AKULÍNA. She started it. She had better keep quiet. You think we do not know all about you?

ANÍSYA. What do you know? Say, say what you know!

AKULÍNA. I know something about you.

ANÍSYA. You are a slut! You are living with a married man.

AKULÍNA. And you have killed your husband!

ANÍSYA (*rushes at Akulína*). You lie!

NIKÍTA (*holding her back*). Anísya, have you forgotten?

ANÍSYA. You can't frighten me. I am not afraid of you.

NIKÍTA. Get out of here! (*Turns her away and pushes her out.*)

ANÍSYA. Where shall I go? I won't go away from my house.

NIKÍTA. Get out, I say! And don't you dare put your foot in again!

ANÍSYA. I will not go. (*Nikita pushes her; Anísya weeps and cries, holding on to the door.*) What? You

want to kick me out of my own house? What are you doing, you rascal? Do you think there is no law against you? Just wait!

NIKÍTA. Well, well!

ANÍSIA. I will go to the elder, to the officer.

NIKÍTA. Get out, I say. (*Pushes her out.*)

ANÍSIA (*behind the door*). I will hang myself!

SCENE XI. Nikíta, Akulína, Anyútka, and Akím.

NIKÍTA. That's all right.

ANYÚTKA. Oh, oh, oh! Mother dear, mother dear. (*Weeping.*)

NIKÍTA. I am not much afraid of her. What are you crying about? Never mind, she will come back. Go and look after the samovár! (*Anyútka exit.*)

SCENE XII. Nikíta, Akím, and Akulína.

AKULÍNA (*picking up her purchases and putting them away*). How that accursed one has been carrying on! Just wait! I will cut up your sleeveless coat. Upon my word, I will.

NIKÍTA. I have driven her away,—what more do you want?

AKULÍNA. She has soiled my new shawl. Dog! If she had not gone I would have scratched out her eyes.

NIKÍTA. Stop your noise! What are you making a noise about? You know I do not love her!

AKULÍNA. Love her? A fine person to love,—that woman with the big snout. If you had let her go then, nothing would have happened. You ought to have sent her to the devil. The house is mine, anyway, and so is the money. She says she is the mistress. Mistress! What kind of a mistress is she to her husband? She is

a ruiner of souls, that's what she is. She will do the same to you!

NIKÍTA. There is no stopping up a woman's mouth! You don't know yourself what you are yelling about.

AKULÍNA. Yes, I do. I will not live with her. I will drive her away. She cannot stay with me. And she calls herself mistress. She is not a mistress, but a jailbird.

NIKÍTA. That will do. What have you to do with her? Don't look at her! Look at me! I am the master. I do what I want. I do not love her any longer — I love you. I love whomever I please. I rule here. She will be locked up. This is where she is. (*Points under his feet.*) Oh, I have no accordion!

The rolls are on the stove,  
The mush is on the shelf,  
And we will live,  
And celebrate,  
And death will come,  
And we will die.  
The rolls are on the stove,  
The mush is on the shelf.

SCENE XIII. The same *and* Mítrich (*enter. Takes off his wraps and climbs on the oven.*).

MÍTRICH. Evidently the women have been fighting again. O Lord, merciful St. Nicholas!

AKÍM (*sitting on the edge of the oven. Takes the leggings and shoes, and puts them on.*). Creep past me to the corner.

MÍTRICH (*creeping*). They won't agree at all. O Lord!

NIKÍTA. Get the syrup! We will drink the tea with it.

SCENE XIV. The same *and* Anyútka.

ANYÚTKA (*enter, to Akulína*). Sister! the samovár is boiling over.



NIKÍTA. Where is mother?

ANYÚTKA. She is standing in the vestibule and weeping.

NIKÍTA. Go and call her, and tell her to bring in the samovár! Akulína, let us have the dishes!

AKULÍNA. The dishes? All right. (*Taking up the dishes.*)

NIKÍTA (*gets the syrup, pretzels, and herring*). This is for myself; for the woman there in the vestibule, — the goods. And here is the money. Wait! (*Takes the abacus.*) I will figure it up at once. (*Casts the account on the abacus.*) The wheat flour eight dimes, the oil — Father, ten roubles. Father! Come to tea! (*Silence. Akim is sitting on the oven and fixing the bast cords of his shoes.*)

SCENE XV. The same and Anísya.

ANÍSYA (*carrying in the samovár*). Where shall I put it?

NIKÍTA. Put it on the table! Well, have you been to the elder's? That's it: talk, and be done with it! Stop being angry! Sit down and drink tea! (*Fills a wine-glass for her.*) Here is a present for you. (*Gives her the roll on which he had been sitting. Anísya takes it in silence, shaking her head.*)

AKÍM (*climbing down and putting on his fur coat. Goes up to the table and puts the money upon it*). Take the money, — take it!

NIKÍTA (*not seeing the money*). Where are you getting ready to go?

AKÍM. I will go, I will go, so to speak, for Christ's sake forgive me! (*Takes his cap and belt.*)

NIKÍTA. I declare! Where do you want to go in night-time?

AKÍM. I cannot, so to speak, remain in your house. I cannot, so to speak, stay here. Forgive me!

NIKÍTA. But why are you rushing away from the tea?

AKÍM (*girding himself*). I will go away, because, so to speak, it is not good here; it is not good here, Nikíta, so to speak. You are living badly, so to speak, Nikíta, badly. I will go away.

NIKÍTA. Stop talking! Sit down and drink tea

ANÍSIA. Father, it will be a disgrace before people. What is it that has offended you?

AKÍM. I have not been offended, so to speak, but I see that everything is making for ruin, so to speak, — yes, my son, for ruin, so to speak.

NIKÍTA. What ruin? Prove it!

AKÍM. To ruin, to ruin, you are going to ruin. I told you so last year.

NIKÍTA. What of it if you told me?

AKÍM. I told you about the orphan. You have wronged, so to speak, the orphan, Marína, — you have wronged her.

NIKÍTA. What are you thinking about? Of old yeast make not a new feast! That is a thing of the past —

AKÍM (*excitedly*). Past? No, friend, it is not past. One sin holds on to another and pulls you along. Nikíta, you are stuck in sins. You are stuck, I see, in sins. You are stuck fast, so to speak.

NIKÍTA. Sit down and drink tea, and stop that talking!

AKÍM. I cannot, so to speak, drink tea with you. Because your evil deeds, so to speak, make me feel bad. I cannot, so to speak, drink with you.

NIKÍTA. You are repeating one and the same story. Go to the table!

AKÍM. You are sitting in your wealth, so to speak, as though in a snare, in a snare, so to speak. Oh, Nikíta, one needs a soul.

NIKÍTA. What right have you to talk to me that way in my own house? What do you want of me, anyway?

Am I a little boy that will allow himself to be pulled by his hair? They don't do these things nowadays.

AKÍM. That is so: I have heard that nowadays they pull fathers' beards, so to speak, — but this leads only to ruin, to ruin, so to speak.

NIKÍTA (*angrily*). We are getting along without your help. But you have come to ask aid of me.

AKÍM. Money? There is your money. I will go and beg, so to speak, but I will not, so to speak, take the money.

NIKÍTA. Stop that! Why are you so angry, and breaking up the company? (*Holds him back by his hand.*)

AKÍM (*moaning*). Let me go! I will not stay! I would rather sleep near the fence than in your nastiness. Pshaw, God forgive you! (*Exit.*)

SCENE XVI. Nikíta, Akulína, Anísya, and Mítrich.

NIKÍTA. I declare!

SCENE XVII. The same and Akím.

AKÍM (*opening the door*). Nikíta, come to your senses! One needs a soul! (*Exit.*)

SCENE XVIII. Nikíta, Akulína, Anísya, and Mítrich.

AKULÍNA (*taking the cups*). Well, shall I pour out the tea? (*All are silent.*)

MÍTRICH (*bellowing*). O Lord, have mercy on me, sinful man! (*All tremble.*)

NIKÍTA (*lying down on a bench*). Oh, I feel bad, so bad. Akulína, where is the accordion?

AKULÍNA. The accordion? What are you thinking about? You have left it to be mended. I have filled the glasses. Come and drink!

NIKÍTA. I don't want to. Put out the light — Oh, I feel bad, so bad! (*Weeping.*)

*Curtain.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ OF ACT IV.

NIKÍTA.

MATRÉNA.

MÍTRICH.

ANÍSYA.

NEIGHBOUR.

ANYÚTKA.

SPONSOR.

SUITOR, a gloomy peasant.

### ACT IV.

*Autumn. Evening. The moon is shining. The interior of the farmyard. In the middle, the vestibule; on the right, the warm hut and the gate; on the left, the cold hut and the cellar. In the house are heard conversation and drunken shouts. Neighbour comes out of the vestibule and calls Anísya's sponsor.*

#### SCENE I. Sponsor and Neighbour.

NEIGHBOUR. Why did Akulína not come out?

SPONSOR. Why did she not come out? She would like to, but she does not feel well. The suitors came to see the bride, but she is lying in the cold hut and will not show up, my dear.

NEIGHBOUR. What is the matter?

SPONSOR. She has been bewitched, — she has it in her belly.

NEIGHBOUR. You don't say so?

SPONSOR. I do. (*She whispers something in her ear.*)

NEIGHBOUR. Well, what a sin! The suitors will find out about it.

SPONSOR. How are they to find out? They are all drunk. They are more after the dowry. They are giving the girl two fur coats, six bodices, a French shawl, a big lot of linen, and, they say, two hundred roubles in money.

NEIGHBOUR. What pleasure is there in such money? What a shame!

SPONSOR. Hush. The suitor is coming. (*They grow silent and walk into the vestibule.*)

SCENE II. Suitor (*alone, coming out of the vestibule, and hiccoughing*).

SUITOR. I am sweating. Oh, it is so hot. I want to cool off a little. (*Stands blowing.*) God knows how it is — something wrong — does not please me — Well, an old woman —

SCENE III. Suitor and Matréna.

MATRÉNA (*coming out of the vestibule*). I was looking for the suitor, and here you are. Well, my dear, thank the Lord, everything is done honourably. A suitor must not brag. I do not even know how to brag. You have come to do a good work, and God will grant you to thank me for it all your life. The bride, you know, is a rare one. You will not find such a girl in the whole country.

SUITOR. That is so, if only we don't get fooled about the money.

MATRÉNA. Don't mention the money! She has all her parents have left her. In our time one hundred and fifty roubles are not a small matter.

SUITOR. We are satisfied, but we do not want to wrong our child, — we want to do it in the best possible manner.



MATRÉNA. I tell you the truth, suitor: if it were not for me you would not get her in a lifetime. The Kormílin have sent to inquire about her, but I have stopped them. As to the money, I will tell you how it was: when the man was dying,—the kingdom of heaven be his,—he told the widow to take Nikíta to the house,—my son has told me so,—and the money was to go to Akulína. Another man would have made use of it, but Nikíta gives her every cent that belongs to her. Think what a sum it is!

SUITOR. People say that there was more money left for her. My son is a shrewd one himself.

MATRÉNA. Oh, my little white doves! A piece of bread looks big in other people's hands. She gets every cent that is coming to her. I tell you: stop all delay and clinch the bargain at once! The girl is as pretty as a beanstalk.

SUITOR. That is so. My wife and I have been wondering why the girl has not come out? We thought she might be an ailing girl.

MATRÉNA. Not at all. She is not a sickly girl. There is not another such a healthy woman in the whole country. She is so plump you can't pinch her. You saw her the other day. She is a great worker. It is true she is a little hard of hearing, but a worm bite does not hurt a good apple. She did not come out because she has had the evil eye upon her. Somebody has bewitched her. I know who the bitch is that has done it. They knew that the match-makers were to be at the house, so they bewitched her. I will take off the evil eye. To-morrow the girl will be up again. Have no doubts about the girl!

SUITOR. All right,—the affair is settled.

MATRÉNA. That's it. Don't back out again! And don't forget me! I have interceded for you, so don't forget me!

A WOMAN'S VOICE (*in the vestibule*). Iván, let us go, — it is time!

SUITOR. Right away! (*Exit. People crowd in the vestibule, and drive away.*)

SCENE IV. Anísya and Anyútka.

ANYÚTKA (*running out of the vestibule and beckoning to Anísya*). Mamma!

ANÍSYA (*from a distance*). What is it?

ANYÚTKA. Mamma, come here, or they will hear me. (*Goes with her to the barn.*)

ANÍSYA. Well, what is it? Where is Akulína?

ANYÚTKA. She has gone to the granary. She is carrying on awfully there! Truly, "I have no more strength," says she. "I will cry out," says she, "as loud as I can." Truly.

ANÍSYA. Maybe she can wait. Let us first see off the guests.

ANYÚTKA. Oh, mamma! It is hard for her. And she is so angry. "Their drinking on my account is all in vain," says she. "I will not marry. I will sooner die," says she. Mamma, I am afraid she may die. I am awfully afraid!

ANÍSYA. Don't be afraid, she won't. Don't go to her. Go! (*Anísya and Anyútka exeunt.*)

SCENE V. Mítrich (*alone. Comes from the gate and picks up the scattered hay*).

MÍTRICH. O Lord, merciful St. Nicholas! What a lot of liquor they have used up! And how it smells! It stinks even here in the yard from it. No, I don't want it, — go to! How they have scattered the hay! They don't eat it, but only nose through it. There will be a whole bundle of it. Oh, what a smell! Almost under my

nose. Go to! (*Yawning.*) It is time to go to bed! I don't want to go into the house. It is hovering all about my nose. It smells strong, — accursed liquor! (*One hears the people departing.*) They are gone, O Lord, merciful St. Nicholas! They are only collaring each other, and pulling the wool over each other's eyes. It is all nonsense.

SCENE VI. *Mítrich and Nikíta.*

NIKÍTA (*coming out*). Mítrich, go on the oven! I will pick it up.

MÍTRICH. All right. Throw it to the sheep! Well, have you seen them off?

NIKÍTA. I have, but things don't go right. I don't know what will happen.

MÍTRICH. Bosh! There is a Foundling House for that. Throw out anything you please, and they will pick it up. Give them all the babies you want, they won't ask any questions. They even give money, so that all a woman has to do after that is to become a wet-nurse. Nowadays these things are done very simply.

NIKÍTA. Look here, Mítrich, don't say more than you need to!

MÍTRICH. What do I care? Sweep away the track as well as you can! Oh, how you smell of liquor! I will go in. (*Goes away, yawning.*) O Lord!

SCENE VII. *Nikíta (long silent. Sits down on a sleigh).*

NIKÍTA. Bad business!

SCENE VIII. *Nikíta and Anísya.*

ANÍSYA (*coming out*). Where are you?

NIKÍTA. Here I am.

ANÍSYA. What are you sitting there for? There is no time to lose. You have to carry it out at once.

NIKÍTA. What are we going to do?

ANÍSYA. Do what I tell you!

NIKÍTA. You had better take it to the Foundling House.

ANÍSYA. You carry it there, if you want to. You are ready enough to do something nasty, but very weak in straightening things out.

NIKÍTA. What is to be done?

ANÍSYA. I told you: go into the cellar and dig a hole there!

NIKÍTA. Can't you do it any other way?

ANÍSYA (*mocking him*). Any other way? No, you can't. You ought to have thought of it before. Go where I tell you!

NIKÍTA. Oh, it is a bad business!

#### SCENE IX. The same and Anyútká.

ANYÚTKA. Mamma! grandmother is calling you. Sister must have a baby, — truly, — it has been crying.

ANÍSYA. Don't talk! The paralysis take you! The kittens are mewling. Go into the house and sleep! Or I will teach you!

ANYÚTKA. Mamma dear, really, upon my word —

ANÍSYA (*raising her hand against her*). I will show you! Don't let me hear a word from you!

ANYÚTKA (*runs away*).

ANÍSYA (*to Nikíta*). Go and do as I tell you! Or look out! (*Exit.*)

#### SCENE X. Nikíta (*alone, long silent*).

NIKÍTA. Bad business! Oh, these women! It is bad! She says I ought to have thought of it before.

When was I to have thought of it before? When was I to have thought of it? Last year it was Anísya that stuck to me. Well? Am I a monk? The master died and I covered up the sin by marrying her, as is proper. There was no fault of mine. Such things often happen. And then the powders. Did I persuade her to do so? If I had known it at the time I would have killed the bitch. Really, I would. The slut has made me a part of her nastiness. Ever since then I have loathed her. When my mother told me about it I began to loathe her, and could not look into her eyes. How could I, after that, get along with her? And so it started. Then this girl began to cling to me. Why not I? If not I, some one else would have done it. And now what has come of it! Again it is not my fault. Oh! it's a bad business. (*Sits in thought.*) It is a bold thing the women have thought out. No, I won't do it!

SCENE XL. *Nikíta and Matréna (with a lantern and a spade, walking hurriedly).*

MATRÉNA. Don't sit there like a sitting hen! Your wife told you to do something. Are you ready?

NIKÍTA. What are you going to do?

MATRÉNA. We know what to do. You attend to your business!

NIKÍTA. You will get me entangled.

MATRÉNA. What? Do you intend to back out? You have gone so far, and now you want to back out.

NIKÍTA. It is a terrible thing! But the thing is living!

MATRÉNA. A living thing! It is barely living. Where would you put it? Take it to the Foundling House, and it will die all the same. Then everybody will know it, and the girl will be on our hands.

NIKÍTA. But if they should find it out?

MATRÉNA. It is in your own house, and you can do it right. We will fix it so that not a word of it will be heard. Do as I tell you! But we are women and can't get along without a man. Take the spade! Go down and fix it! I will hold the lantern.

NIKÍTA. What shall I fix?

MATRÉNA (*in a whisper*). Dig a hole! Then we will take it down and bury it at once. There she is, calling again. Go, I say. I must go.

NIKÍTA. Well, is the child dead?

MATRÉNA. Of course, it is. Only do it more lively! The people are not yet asleep, and they, the accursed ones, may hear and see it. The officer passed here in the evening. So go! (*Giving him the spade.*) Go down in the cellar! Dig a hole in the corner! The earth is soft there, — and then you will smooth it out again. Mother earth won't tell: it will be as smooth as though a cow had licked it down. Go, go, my son!

NIKÍTA. You will get me entangled. Go to! Really, I will go away. Do yourselves as you please!

## SCENE XII. The same and Anísya.

ANÍSYA (*from the door*). Well, have you dug it?

MATRÉNA. What did you come here for? What have you done with it?

ANÍSYA. I have covered it with a bag, so it won't be heard. Well, hasn't he dug it yet?

MATRÉNA. He does not want to.

ANÍSYA (*rushing out in fury*). He does not want to! And does he want to feed lice in the prison? I will go at once and tell the officer. I will make an end of it at once. I will tell him everything!

NIKÍTA (*frightened*). What will you tell?

ANÍSYA. What? Everything! Who took the money? You! (*Nikita is silent.*) And who gave him the poison?



I did. But you knew, you knew, you knew! We had agreed upon it.

MATRÉNA. That will do! Nikíta, don't be so stubborn! What is to be done? You must take the trouble! Go, my dear!

ANÍSIA. I declare! The pretty fellow! He does not want to! You have wronged me enough! You have been misusing me, and now is my turn. Go, I say, or I will show you what I can do. Take the spade, here! Go!

NIKÍTA. Don't insist so! (*Takes the spade, but reluctantly.*) If I don't want to I won't go.

ANÍSIA. You won't? (*Begins to cry out.*) Oh, people, people!

MATRÉNA (*putting her hand on her mouth*). What are you doing? Are you insane? He will go. Go, my son, go, my dear!

ANÍSIA. I will call for help at once.

NIKÍTA. Stop it! Oh, what people they are! Hurry up! I will do it. (*Goes to the cellar.*)

MATRÉNA. Yes, my son, you knew how to have a good time, — know how to hide your crime!

ANÍSIA (*still excited*). He and his slut have been making fun of me, — that will stop now! I sha'n't be the only one. Let him be a murderer, too! He will know how it feels.

MATRÉNA. Well, well, how you are blustering! Woman, don't be so angry, but do everything softly and slowly, as is proper. Go to the girl! He will do the work. (*Follows him with the lantern. Nikíta goes into the cellar.*)

ANÍSIA. I will make him choke the life out of his accursed offspring. (*Still in excitement.*) I am tired having Peter's bones upon my own conscience. Let him find out what it is! I will have no pity on myself, I will not, I have said.

NIKÍTA (*from the cellar*). Let me see the light!

MATRÉNA (*puts down the lantern, to Anísya*). He is digging. Go and bring it!

ANÍSya. Watch him or the accursed one will go away. I will bring it out.

MATRÉNA. Say, don't forget to baptize it! If you can't do it, I will. Have you a cross?

ANÍSya. I know where to find one. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XIII. *Matréna (alone) and Nikíta (in the cellar).*

MATRÉNA. How the woman has flared up! Of course, it is provoking. God aid us in covering up the matter, and let there be an end of it! We will get rid of the girl without a crime. My son will then live quietly. They have plenty of everything in the house, thank God. He will not forget me. What would they be without Matréna. They would not be able to think out a thing. (*Into the cellar.*) Are you done, my son?

NIKÍTA (*coming out of the cellar. His head is visible*). Well? Are you going to bring it? Why are you crawling so? If it is to be done, do it quick!

SCENE XIV. *The same and Anísya. (Matréna walks over to the vestibule and meets Anísya. Anísya comes out with the baby swaddled in rags.)*

MATRÉNA. Have you crossed it?

ANÍSya. Of course. I took it away by force. She would not let me have it. (*Comes up to Nikíta and gives it to him.*)

NIKÍTA (*not taking it*). Take it down yourself

ANÍSya. Take it, I say. (*She throws the child to him.*)

NIKÍTA (*catching it*). Alive! Mother, it is moving! It is alive! What shall I —

ANÍSYA (*taking the child out of his hands and throwing it into the cellar*). Strangle it at once and it won't live. (*Pushes Nikíta down-stairs.*) This is your affair. Make an end of it!

MATRÉNA (*sitting down on the top step*). He is compassionate. It is hard for him. Well, it is his own sin. (*Anísya stands over the cellar. Matréná sits down on the steps of the porch and looks at her.*) Oh, how frightened he got! Suppose it is hard,—still it has to be done. What else could we do? When you come to think of it: how some people beg for children! But God does not grant them any, and they get only still-born children. There, for example, the pope's wife—and here is a living child, and nobody wants it. (*Looking down into the cellar.*) He must be through. (*To Anísya.*) Well?

ANÍSYA (*looking down into the cellar*). He has covered it with a board and is sitting down on it. He has done it, no doubt.

MATRÉNA. Oh, oh! I should like to get along without sinning, but what is to be done?

NIKÍTA (*coming out, shivering*). It is still living! I can't! It is living!

ANÍSYA. If it is living, where are you going? (*Wants to stop him.*)

NIKÍTA (*rushes against her*). Go away, or I will kill you! (*Seizes her hand; she tears herself away; he runs after her with the spade. Matréná runs toward him and stops him. Anísya runs upon the porch. Matréná wants to take away the spade.*)

NIKÍTA (*to his mother*). I will kill you, you, too! Get away! (*Matréná runs away to Anísya on the porch. Nikíta stops.*) I will kill you! I will kill everybody!

MATRÉNA. He does this from fright. Never mind, it will pass.

NIKÍTA. What have they done? What have they done with me? How it cried!—How it crunched under

me! What have they done with me? And it is alive, still alive! (*Silent and listening.*) It is crying, oh, how it is crying. (*Runs to the cellar.*)

MATRÉNA (*to Anísya*). He is running down to get it buried, no doubt. Nikíta, do you want the lantern?

NIKÍTA (*does not answer. Listening at the cellar*). I do not hear it. It is quiet. (*Goes away and stops.*) Oh, how the bones crunched under me! Crr — crr — What have they done with me? (*Listens again.*) Again it cries, really it does. What is it? Mother, O mother! (*Goes up to her.*)

MATRÉNA. What is it, my son?

NIKÍTA. Mother dear, I can't finish it. I can't. Mother dear, take pity on me!

MATRÉNA. Oh, how frightened you are! Go, go, take some liquor to brace you up.

NIKÍTA. Mother dear, I am undone. What have you done with me? Oh, how those bones did crunch, and how it cried! — Mother dear, what have you done with me? (*Walks away and sits down on the sleigh.*)

MATRÉNA. Go, my son, and take a drink! It makes one feel bad to do such things at night-time. But let day come, and let another day pass, and you will forget to think of it. Wait a bit, and we will get the girl married, and we will think no more of it. But you go and take a drink! I will fix everything in the cellar.

NIKÍTA (*shuddering*). Is there any liquor left? I will take a drink. (*Exit. Anísya, who has been standing all the time near the vestibule, steps silently aside.*)

#### SCENE XV. Matréna and Anísya.

MATRÉNA. Go, go, my dear! I will go down in the cellar myself, and will bury it. Where did he throw the spade? (*Finds the spade and goes half-way down*

*into the cellar.*) Anísya, come here and hold the lantern for me !

ANÍSYA. And he ?

MATRÉNA. He is dreadfully frightened. You went for him too stiffly. Never mind, he will come to. God be with him ! I will do the work myself. Put the lantern here. I shall be able to see. (*Matréna disappears in the cellar.*)

ANÍSYA (*toward the door, through which Nikíta has gone*). Well, are you through celebrating ? You have been spreading yourself. Now wait and see how it feels ! You won't be so dashing after this !

SCENE XVI. The same and Nikíta (*running out of the vestibule, toward the cellar*).

NIKÍTA. Mother, O mother !

MATRÉNA (*sticking her head out of the cellar*). What is it, my son ?

NIKÍTA (*listening*). Don't bury it ! It is alive. Don't you hear it ? It is alive ! Do you hear it cry ? — I hear it —

MATRÉNA. How can it cry ? You have crushed it flat. You have smashed the whole head.

NIKÍTA. What is this ? (*Closes his ears.*) It is crying still ! I have forfeited my life, I have forfeited it ! What have they done with me ? Where shall I go ? (*Sits down on the porch.*)

*Curtain.*

## VARIANT

INSTEAD of Scenes XIII., XIV., XV., and XVI. of Act IV., the following variant may be read.

### PART II.

#### Room of Act I.

SCENE I. Anyútka (*undressed, on the door bench, under a caftan*). Mítrich (*sitting on the hanging bed and smoking*).

MÍTRICH. I declare, they have filled the room with the smell of liquor, — pea-pie choke them! They have poured out a lot! I can't get rid of it by smoking. It just stays in my nose. O Lord! It is time to go to sleep. (*Goes up to the little lamp and wants to turn it down.*)

ANYÚTKA (*leaping up and sitting down*). Grandfather, please, don't put it out!

MÍTRICH. Why not?

ANYÚTKA. There has been such a noise in the yard. (*Listening.*) Do you hear? They have gone to the granary again.

MÍTRICH. What is that to you? They don't ask you about it? Lie down and go to sleep! I will turn out the light. (*Turns it down.*)

ANYÚTKA. Grandfather, golden one! Don't put out the light! Let it burn a wee little bit, or it will frighten me.

MÍTRICH (*laughing.*) All right, all right. (*Sits down near her.*) What frightens you?



ANYÚTKA. How can I help being frightened, grandfather! Sister was suffering so. She struck her head against the flour box. (*In a whisper*). I know — she wants to get a baby — Maybe it is born now —

MÍTRICH. You imp, the frogs may kick you! You must know everything! Lie down and sleep! (*Anyútká lies down*). That's it. (*Covers her*). That's it. If you know much, you will soon get old.

ANYÚTKA. And will you go on the oven?

MÍTRICH. Where else? Silly girl! She wants to know everything. (*Covers her still more and rises to go*). Lie like this and sleep! (*Goes to the oven*).

ANYÚTKA. It cried once, and now you can't hear it.

MÍTRICH. O Lord, merciful St. Nicholas! What is it you can't hear?

ANYÚTKA. The baby.

MÍTRICH. You can't hear it because there is none.

ANYÚTKA. But I heard it, truly, I did. Such a thin voice.

MÍTRICH. You did not hear it. What you heard was a girl crying, for the bogie-man put her in a sack and took her away.

ANYÚTKA. What bogie-man?

MÍTRICH. The bogie-man, that's all. (*Climbing on the oven*). The oven feels good to-day, — it is warm. Fine! O Lord, merciful St. Nicholas!

ANYÚTKA. Grandfather, are you going to sleep?

MÍTRICH. What did you think? That I was going to sing? (*Silence*).

ANYÚTKA. Grandfather, O grandfather! They are digging! Upon my word, they are. Do you hear? Truly, they are digging.

MÍTRICH. What nonsense! Digging! Digging at night! Who is digging? The cow is scratching herself. And you say: digging. Sleep, I say, or I will put out the light altogether.

ANYÚTKA. Darling, grandfather, don't put it out! I won't do it again, upon my word, I won't. I am frightened.

MÍTRICH. Frightened? Don't be afraid,—there is nothing to frighten you. You are afraid yourself, so you think something frightens you. How can you help being frightened if you are afraid? What a foolish girl! (*Silence. A cricket.*)

ANYÚTKA (*in a whisper*). Grandfather, O grandfather! Are you asleep?

MÍTRICH. Well, what is it again?

ANYÚTKA. What is a bogie-man?

MÍTRICH. I'll tell you. If a child won't go to sleep, just as you are doing now, he comes with a sack and whisks her into it. Then he puts in his own head, raises her shirt, and begins to whip her.

ANYÚTKA. What does he whip her with?

MÍTRICH. With a bath broom.

ANYÚTKA. But he can't see inside the sack!

MÍTRICH. Never mind, he can.

ANYÚTKA. I will bite him.

MÍTRICH. No, dear, you won't.

ANYÚTKA. Grandfather, somebody is coming! Who is it? O mother, who is it?

MÍTRICH. Let them come! What do you want? I suppose it is your mother.

SCENE II. The same *and* Anísya (*enter*).

ANÍSYA. Anyútka! (*Anyútka pretends to be asleep.*)  
Mítrich!

MÍTRICH. What?

ANÍSYA. Why are you burning the lamp? We will sleep in the cold hut.

MÍTRICH. I have just undressed myself. I will put it out.

ANÍSYA (*looking for something in the coffer, and grumbling*). You never can find a thing when you need it.

MÍTRICH. What are you looking for?

ANÍSYA. I am looking for a cross to baptize it with. God grant it will die! It will be a sin to let it die unbaptized.

MÍTRICH. Of course, you must do everything as is proper. Well, have you found it?

ANÍSYA. I have. (*Exit.*)

### SCENE III. Mítrich and Anyútká.

MÍTRICH. That's it. I would have given her mine. O Lord!

ANYÚTKA (*jumping down and trembling*). Oh, oh, grandfather! Don't fall asleep, for Christ's sake! I am afraid.

MÍTRICH. What are you afraid of?

ANYÚTKA. The baby will, no doubt, die. The midwife baptized Aunt Arína's baby, and it died, too.

MÍTRICH. If it will die they will bury it.

ANYÚTKA. Maybe it would not have died if Grandmother Matréna were not here. I heard what grandmother said, truly, I did.

MÍTRICH. What did you hear? Sleep, I say! Cover up your head, that's all.

ANYÚTKA. If it should live, I would take care of it.

MÍTRICH (*bellowing*). O Lord!

ANYÚTKA. Where will they put it?

MÍTRICH. They will put it where it belongs. It is not your sorrow. Sleep, I say! Mother will come and will give it to you! (*Silence.*)

ANYÚTKA. Grandfather! They did not kill the girl you told me about?

MÍTRICH. What girl? Oh, that one! She came out all right.

ANYÚTKA. Grandfather, you told me they found her, didn't you?

MÍTRICH. Yes, they did.

ANYÚTKA. Where did they find her? Tell me.

MÍTRICH. They found her in their house. The soldiers came to the village and began to rummage through the houses. In one of them that girl was lying on her stomach. They wanted to strike her. It made me feel bad, and so I picked her up, but she kept kicking. She made herself heavy, as though she weighed two hundred pounds, and she kept scratching anything she got into her hands, so that it was hard to get away from her. And so I picked her up and patted her on her head. She was as rough as a hedgehog. I patted her and patted her until she quieted down. I soaked a piece of hardtack and gave it to her. She understood what I wanted. She ate it. What was I to do with her? We took her along. We fed her, and she got used to us. We took her along on our expedition, and she went with us. She was a nice girl.

ANYÚTKA. Wasn't she baptized?

MÍTRICH. I don't know. They said she was not completely baptized, because her people were not like ours.

ANYÚTKA. Was she a German?

MÍTRICH. German! No. She was not a German, but an Asiatic. They are all like Jews, but not exactly Jews. They were Poles, but Asiatics. Krudles, — Krugles is their name, — well, I have forgotten which it is. We called the girl Sáša. Sáša was a pretty child. I have forgotten everything else, but I see the girl right before me, pea-pie choke her! This is all I remember from my whole soldier's life. I only remember how they used to flog me, and the girl. She used to hold on to my neck, and I carried her. You could not find a finer child. Later we gave her up. The captain's wife took her for a daughter. And she turned out a fine woman. The soldiers were so sorry to part with her!

ANYÚTKA. Grandfather, I remember how father died. You were not living at our house then. He called up Nikíta and said: "Forgive me," says he, "Nikíta!" and he burst out crying. (*Sighing.*) It was such a pity to see him.

MÍTRICH. Yes, that's so.

ANYÚTKA. Grandfather, O grandfather! There is again a noise in the cellar. Oh, my dear! Oh, grandfather, they are doing something to the baby. It is such a tiny one. Oh, oh! (*Covers up her head and weeps.*)

MÍTRICH (*listening*). Yes, they are up to something bad. Those women are a bad lot. You can't say much good of the men, but the women — they are like wild beasts. They fear nothing.

ANYÚTKA (*rising*). Grandfather, O grandfather!

MÍTRICH. Well, what is it?

ANYÚTKA. The other day a wanderer stopped here overnight. He said that if a baby died its little soul went straight to heaven. Is it true?

MÍTRICH. I don't know. I suppose it does. Why?

ANYÚTKA. I should like to die. (*Sobbing.*)

MÍTRICH. If you die you don't count.

ANYÚTKA. Up to ten years you are a child, and your soul may go to God. After that you get spoiled.

MÍTRICH. I should say you do! How can you women help spoiling? Who teaches you? What do you see? What do you hear? Nothing but badness. I have not learned much, but I know at least something, not like a village woman. What is a village woman? Nothing but dirt. There are many millions of you women in Russia, but you are as blind as moles, — you know nothing. All you know is how to fan off a cow's death, and all kinds of enchantments, and how to take children to a sitting hen.

ANYÚTKA. Mamma has taken me there, too.

MÍTRICH. Precisely, that's it. There are millions of you women and girls, but you are all like the beasts

of the forest. Just as one has been born, so she dies. She has neither seen nor heard anything. A man will learn something, if nowhere else, at least in the inn, or by some chance, in prison, or in the army, as I have. But what about a woman? She does not know a thing about God,—nay, she does not know one day from another. They creep about like blind pups, and stick their heads into the manure. All they know is their foolish songs: Ho, ho, ho, ho — But what this ho-ho is they don't know themselves.

ANYÚTKA. Grandfather, I know nearly half of the Lord's prayer.

MÍTRICH. You know a lot! Nor can one expect it of you. Who is teaching you? All the teaching you get is from a drunken peasant with the reins. I do not know who will be responsible for you. The sergeant or the corporal is responsible for the recruits. But there is nobody who may be made responsible for you women. You women are like riotous cattle without a shepherd,—a stupid set you are. A most senseless lot!

ANYÚTKA. What is it going to be?

MÍTRICH. What?—Cover up your head and go to sleep. O Lord! (*Silence. A cricket.*)

ANYÚTKA (*leaping up*). Grandfather! Something is calling in the street! Upon my word, somebody is calling. Grandfather dear, he is coming this way.

MÍTRICH. I tell you, cover yourself up!

#### SCENE IV. The same, Nikíta, and Matréna.

NIKÍTA (*enter*). What have they done with me? What have they done with me?

MATRÉNA. Take a drink, my dear, take a drink! (*Gets the liquor and puts it on the table.*)



NIKÍTA. Give it to me. I want to drink.

MATRÉNA. Softly! They are not asleep yet. Here, drink!

NIKÍTA. What is that for? Why did you think that out! Could you not have carried it anywhere?

MATRÉNA (*in a whisper*). Sit down awhile, and drink some more, and take a smoke! This will drive away your bad thoughts.

NIKÍTA. Mother dear, I am undone. When it cries, and the little bones begin to crunch, crr — crr, I lose my manhood.

MATRÉNA. Don't mention it! You are saying unseemly things. Of course it makes one feel bad to do such things at night-time. But let day come, and another day pass, and you will forget about it. (*Goes up to Nikíta, and puts her hand on his shoulder.*)

NIKÍTA. Go away from me! What have you done with me?

MATRÉNA. My son, don't say that! (*Takes hold of his hand.*)

NIKÍTA. Go away from me! I will kill you! I don't care for anything now! I will kill you!

MATRÉNA. Oh, oh, how frightened you are! You had better go to bed.

NIKÍTA. I have no place to go to. I am lost.

MATRÉNA (*shaking her head*). Oh, oh! I will go and fix it all. And he will sit here until he feels better. (*Exit.*)

#### SCENE V. Nikíta, Mítrich, and Anyútka.

NIKÍTA (*sits with his hands over his face, while Mítrich and Anyútka keep quiet*). It cries, really it cries, hear, hear — I hear it. She will bury it, she will! (*Runs to the door.*) Mother, do not bury it. It is alive!

## SCENE VI. The same and Matréná.

MATRÉNA (*returning, in a whisper*). Christ be with you! What are you thinking about? How can it be alive? All its bones are crushed.

NIKÍTA. Give me some more liquor! (*Drinks.*)

MATRÉNA. Go, my son! You will now fall asleep, and all will pass.

NIKÍTA (*stands and listens*). It is alive! I hear it cry. Don't you hear it? Listen!

MATRÉNA (*in a whisper*). No, I don't.

NIKÍTA. Mother dear! I have forfeited my life. What have you done with me? Where shall I go? (*Runs out of the room. Matréná follows him.*)

## SCENE VII. Mítrich and Anyútka.

ANYÚTKA. Grandfather dear, they have killed it!

MÍTRICH (*angrily*). Sleep, I say! Oh, may the frogs kick you! I will strike you with the bath broom! Sleep, I say!

ANYÚTKA. Grandfather, golden one! Somebody is taking me by the shoulder! Somebody is taking me with his big hands! Grandfather, truly I will go away from here. Grandfather, golden one, let me come to you on the oven! Let me come, for Christ's sake — He is taking hold of me — He is taking me — Ah! (*Runs to the oven.*)

MÍTRICH. I declare, they have frightened the girl, — those sluts, — may the frogs kick them! Climb up!

ANYÚTKA (*climbing on the oven*). Don't go away!

MÍTRICH. Where should I go? Climb up! O Lord, St. Nicholas! Most Holy Virgin of Kazán! — How they have frightened the girl! (*Covering her up.*) Silly little girl! The sluts have frightened her, though, — pea-pie choke them!

*Curtain.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ OF ACT V.

NIKÍTA.	SECOND GIRL.
ANÍSIA.	OFFICER.
AKULÍNA.	DRIVER.
AKÍM.	BEST MAN.
MATRÉNA.	SUITOR.
ANYÚTKA.	AKULÍNA'S HUSBAND.
MARÍNA.	ELDER.
MARÍNA'S HUSBAND.	GUESTS, WOMEN, GIRLS, AT
FIRST GIRL.	THE WEDDING.

## ACT V.

*The threshing-floor. Nearest to the audience, the grain-ricks ; on the left, the even floor ; on the right, the barn of the threshing-floor. The doors of the barn are open. Through the doors straw is seen ; in the background, the yard. Songs and tambourines are heard. Two girls walk on the path near the barn, toward the house.*

### SCENE I. Two girls.

FIRST GIRL. You see, we have come without getting our shoes dirty ; through the village the road is dreadful ! so dirty. (*They stop to clean their shoes with straw.*)

FIRST GIRL (*looking into the straw and seeing something*). What is this ?

SECOND GIRL (*looking in*). That is Mítrich, their hired hand. See how drunk he is !

FIRST GIRL. He must have been drinking heavily.

SECOND GIRL. Evidently before this day.

FIRST GIRL. Look! He evidently came to fetch some straw. The rope is still in his hands, just as he fell asleep with it.

SECOND GIRL (*listening*). They are still receiving. Evidently they have not pronounced the blessing yet. They say Akulína did not even howl.

FIRST GIRL. Mamma said that she was marrying against her will. Her stepfather threatened her, or else she would never have married. They have been saying some dreadful things about her!

SCENE II. The same and Marína (*catching up with the girls*).

MARÍNA. Good day, girls!

THE GIRLS. Good day, aunty!

MARÍNA. Are you going to the wedding, my dear ones?

FIRST GIRL. That is over. We just came to take a look.

MARÍNA. Call my old man, Semén of Zúev. You know him, perhaps?

FIRST GIRL. Why not? I think he is the bridegroom's relative.

MARÍNA. Yes. The bridegroom is my husband's nephew.

SECOND GIRL. Why don't you go there yourself? You have come to the wedding, then why don't you go?

MARÍNA. I don't feel like it, girl, and I have no time. We must leave. We did not start out for the wedding. We were going to town with oats. We stopped to feed the horses, and they called in my old man.

FIRST GIRL. Where did you stop? At Fédorych's?

MARÍNA. Yes. So I will wait here, while you, dear one, call my old man. Call him, my dear! Say: "Your wife, Marína, tells you to start. Your companions are hitching up the horses!"

FIRST GIRL. All right, since you will not go yourself. (*The girls walk along the path to the yard. Songs and tambourines are heard.*)

SCENE III. *Marína (alone).*

MARÍNA (*in thought*). I don't like to go there, because I have not seen him since he gave me up. It is nearly two years now. I should like to take a peep at him and Anísya, to see how they are getting along. People say they do not live in peace. She is a coarse, headstrong woman. He has, no doubt, thought of me more than once. He wanted to have an easy life, so he took her in my stead. God be with him, I wish him no evil. Then it hurt me. Yes, it pained me then. But now I am over it, and have forgotten it. But I should like to see him — (*Looking toward the yard and seeing Nikíta.*) I declare! What is he coming for? Have the girls told him? Why has he left the guests? I will go away.

SCENE IV. *Marína and Nikíta (who walks at first with drooping head, and swinging his arms. Mumbling).*

MARÍNA. How gloomy he looks!

NIKÍTA (*sees Marína and recognizes her*). Marína! Dear friend! Marína! What are you doing here?

MARÍNA. I came to get my old man.

NIKÍTA. Why did you not come to the wedding? You might have looked at me, and laughed at me.

MARÍNA. Why should I laugh at you? I came to get my husband.

NIKÍTA. Oh, Marína! (*Wants to embrace her.*)

MARÍNA (*angrily turns away*). Nikíta, leave your old tricks! What has been, is no more. I came to get my husband. Is he in your house?

NIKÍTA. So you will not let me recall the past?

MARÍNA. There is no reason for recalling the past. What has been is no more.

NIKÍTA. And it will not return?

MARÍNA. No, it will not. But why did you go away? You are the host, and you have left the wedding-feast.

NIKÍTA (*sitting down on the straw*). Why have I come away? Ah, if you only knew! I feel badly, Marína, I feel so badly that I wish my eyes did not see it all. I left the table and went away from the people, just not to look at them.

MARÍNA (*coming nearer to him*). What is it?

NIKÍTA. It is something that neither my eating, nor my drinking, nor my sleep will make me forget. Oh, I feel so mean, so mean! But the worst thing about it is, Marína, that I have no one to share my sorrow with.

MARÍNA. You can't live without sorrow, Nikíta. I, too, have wept much, but it has all passed.

NIKÍTA. You are speaking of what has been. Oh, my friend! You got through weeping, but I am all undone.

MARÍNA. What is the matter?

NIKÍTA. I am tired of life. I am tired of myself. Oh, Marína, you did not know how to keep me, and you have ruined me and yourself, too. What kind of a life is this?

MARÍNA (*standing near the barn, weeping, and holding herself back*). Nikíta, I do not complain of my own life. May God grant that everybody lead such a life! I confessed to my old man, and he forgave me everything. He does not reproach me for it. I cannot complain about my life. The old man is peaceable. He is good to me, and I dress and wash his children! He takes good care of me, so why should I complain? It evidently was God's fate. And how is your life? You are wealthy —

NIKÍTA. My life! I just did not want to disturb the wedding, or I would have taken a rope, — this rope (*picks up the rope from the straw*), — and would have thrown it



across this beam. Then I would have made a good noose, would have climbed on the beam, and would have put my head into it. That is the life I lead.

MARÍNA. Stop talking that way! Christ protect you!

NIKÍTA. You think I am jesting? Do you think I am drunk? No, I am not. I can't get drunk to-day. Pining, pining is eating me up! I am completely undone, and nothing gives me pleasure. Oh, Marína, what a time we passed together, shortening the nights on the railroad!

MARÍNA. Nikíta, don't tear open old sores! I have accepted the Law, and you have, too. Don't stir up the past!

NIKÍTA. What shall I do with my heart? Where shall I go?

MARÍNA. What shall you do? You have a wife of your own: don't covet other women, but take care of your own! You loved Anísya before, — love her now!

NIKÍTA. Oh, this Anísya is as bitter as wormwood to me, and she has enmeshed my feet like bad weeds.

MARÍNA. Still, she is your wife — What is the use of talking? Go to your guests, and send my husband to me!

NIKÍTA. Oh, if you knew everything! What is the use of mentioning it?

SCENE V. Nikíta, Marína, her husband, and Anyútka.

MARÍNA'S HUSBAND (*coming from the yard, red in his face and drunk*). Marína! Wife! Old woman! Are you here?

NIKÍTA. Here is your husband. He is calling you. Go!

MARÍNA. And what will you do?

NIKÍTA. I? I will lie down here. (*Lies down in the straw.*)

MARÍNA'S HUSBAND. Where is she?

ANYÚTKA. There she is, grandfather, near the barn.

MARÍNA'S HUSBAND. What are you standing there for? Go to the wedding! The hosts ask you to come and honour them. The wedding will soon be over, and then we will go.

MARÍNA (*walking toward her husband*). I did not feel like it.

MARÍNA'S HUSBAND. Go, I say! We will drink a glass, and you will congratulate rogue Petrúnka. The hosts will feel offended if you don't, and we shall have plenty of time to attend to our business. (*Marína's husband embraces her and, tottering, goes away with her.*)

#### SCENE VI. Nikíta and Anyútka.

NIKÍTA (*gets up and sits down on the straw*). I feel even worse since I saw her. What a life it was I led with her! And now I am lost, I am ruined! (*Lies down.*) Whither shall I go? Oh, mother earth, cleave open for me!

ANYÚTKA (*seeing Nikíta and running up to him*). Father, O father! They are looking for you. The sponsor and everybody else have blessed them already, and they are angry.

NIKÍTA (*aside*). Where shall I go?

ANYÚTKA. What is it? What are you saying?

NIKÍTA. Nothing. Don't bother me!

ANYÚTKA. Father! Come with me! (*Nikíta is silent. Anyútka pulls him by the hand.*) Father, go and bless them! Really, they are very angry.

NIKÍTA (*pulling away his hand*). Leave me alone!

ANYÚTKA. Come!

NIKÍTA (*threatening her with the reins*). Go, I say! I will teach you!

ANYÚTKA. I will send mamma to you. (*Runs away.*)

SCENE VII. Nikíta (*alone. Rising*).

NIKÍTA. How can I go? How can I look into their faces? How can I look into her eyes? (*Again lies down.*) Oh, if there were a hole in the ground, I would go through it. People would not see me, and I would not see them. (*Again gets up.*) I will not go — To perdition with them! I will not go. (*Takes off his boots and picks up the rope; makes a noose of it, and puts it around his neck.*) That's what I will do.

SCENE VIII. Nikíta and Matréna. (*Nikíta sees his mother, takes off the rope, and lies down in the straw again.*)

MATRÉNA (*running up out of breath*). Nikíta, O Nikíta! I declare, he does not answer. Nikíta, are you drunk? Come, Nikíta, come! The people are waiting for you.

NIKÍTA. What have you done with me? I am no longer a man.

MATRÉNA. What is the matter with you? Go, my dear, and bless them in all honour, as is proper! The people are waiting for you.

NIKÍTA. How can I bless them?

MATRÉNA. As usual. Don't you know how?

NIKÍTA. I know, I know. Whom shall I bless? What have I done with her?

MATRÉNA. What have you done? There you are again at it! Nobody knows about it: neither cat nor kit nor the pope knows it. The girl is marrying of her own will.

NIKÍTA. How of her own will?

MATRÉNA. She is marrying through fear. Anyway she is marrying. What is to be done? She ought to have thought in time. Now she can't refuse. There is no

offence to the suitors. They saw the girl twice and they get the money. Everything is in tip-top shape.

NIKÍTA. And what about the cellar?

MATRÉNA (*laughing*). The cellar? In the cellar there are mushrooms, cabbage, potatoes, I suppose. What is the use of thinking of the past?

NIKÍTA. I should like not to think of it, but I can't. Every time I think of it, I hear it. Oh, what have you done with me?

MATRÉNA. Don't act the fool!

NIKÍTA (*lying down, face downward*). Mother! Don't torment me! I am sick of it all!

MATRÉNA. But you must go. The people are talking as it is, and now the father goes away and does not dare bless them. They will begin to put things together. They will figure it all out. The moment you are slow they will begin to guess. Put on a good face and they will receive you with grace. Above everything else, my son, don't be timid, or they will make it out at once.

NIKÍTA. Oh, you have entangled me!

MATRÉNA. Stop that! Come with me! Go and bless them! Do everything in proper shape, and that will be the end of it.

NIKÍTA (*still lying face downward*). I cannot.

MATRÉNA (*aside*). What has happened? Everything was going well, and suddenly this has come over him. He must be bewitched. Nikíta, get up! See, Anísya has left the guests and is coming this way

#### SCENE IX. Nikíta, Matréná, and Anísya.

ANÍSYA (*dressed up, red in her face, under the influence of liquor*). Everything is going so well, mother! So well and honourably! And how satisfied the people are! — where is he?

MATRÉNA. Here he is, my dear, here. He is lying in the straw and won't get up.

NIKÍTA (*looking at his wife*). I declare, she is drunk, too. It sickens me to look at her. How can I live with her? (*Turns his face downward.*) I will kill her some day. It will only be worse.

ANÍSYA. So you have hidden yourself in the straw! Has the liquor knocked you down? (*Laughing.*) I should like to lie down with you myself, but I have no time. Come, I will lead you in. Oh, how nice everything is in the house! It makes one feel good to look at it. There is an accordion! The women are singing so nicely. They are all drunk, as is proper. It is so nice!

NIKÍTA. What is nice?

ANÍSYA. The wedding, the merry wedding. All people say that it is a rare wedding. Everything is so nice and proper. Come now! We will go together—I have had some liquor, but I will manage to take you there. (*Takes him by the hand.*)

NIKÍTA (*pulling himself away in disgust*). Go by yourself! I will be there.

ANÍSYA. What are you pouting about? We are rid of all our trouble and have made her a bride,—so now we can live an easy life. Everything is done so properly, and according to the Law. I can't tell you how happy I am. I feel as though I were marrying you again. And the people are so satisfied! They are all very thankful. And such nice guests. Iván Moséich and the officer, too. They have honoured us, too.

NIKÍTA. Very well, stay with them! What did you come here for?

ANÍSYA. You must come! How will it look for the hosts to run away from the guests? And they are such nice guests!

NIKÍTA (*getting up and picking off the straw*). Go! I will be there in a minute.

MATRÉNA. The cuckoo of the night has cuckooed better than the cuckoo of the day. He did not listen to me, but he obeys his wife. (*Matréna and Anísya walk away.*)

MATRÉNA. Are you coming?

NIKÍTA. I will be there right away. You go, and I will follow you. I will come to bless them — (*The women stop.*) Go, and I will follow you. Go, I say! (*The women exeunt.*)

NIKÍTA (*looking in their direction, in thought*).

SCENE X. Nikíta (*alone*), then Mítrich.

NIKÍTA (*sits down and takes off his coat*). Wait until I come! You look for me on the beam! I will straighten the noose and jump from the beam, and then you may look for me. The reins are here, that is good. (*In thought.*) If it were any kind of a sorrow, it would pass in time; but this is in the heart, and it cannot be taken out. (*Looking at the yard.*) She is coming again, I think. (*Mocking Anísya.*) "Oh, how nice it is! I will lie down with you!" Oh, you contemptible witch! Embrace me when they take me off from the beam. There will be an end of it. (*Takes the rope and pulls it.*)

MÍTRICH (*drunk. Pulls the rope back and gets up*). I won't let you. I won't let anybody. I will bring it myself. I told you: I will bring the straw myself. Nikíta, is it you? (*Laughing.*) Oh, the devil! Did you come for the straw?

NIKÍTA. Let me have the rope!

MÍTRICH. No, wait! The peasants sent me for it. I will bring it. (*Rises to his feet and begins to scrape up some straw; but he totters, and finally falls down.*) The liquor is stronger: it has me down.

NIKÍTA. Let me have the reins!

MÍTRICH. I told you I wouldn't. Nikíta, you are a stupid! (*Laughing.*) I love you, but you are a stupid.



You see I am drunk. The devil I care for you! You think that I need you — Look at me! I am an under-officer! You are a stupid, and you can't even pronounce it: Under-officer of the very first regiment of her Majesty's Grenadiers. I have served my Tsar and my country faithfully and honestly. What am I? You think I am a soldier? No, I am not a soldier, but the very worst kind of a man, — an erring orphan. I swore off drinking, and see how I am swilling! Well, do you think I am afraid of you? I guess not. I am not afraid of anybody. When I drink, I drink! I'll be on a tear for two weeks now, — I'll paint things red! I will spend everything I have on me for drinks: I will sell my cap, pawn my passport, — and I am not afraid of a soul! They used to flog me in the army to make me stop drinking. They walloped me: "Well," they said, "will you stop it?" "No," said I. I was not afraid of them, — that's the kind of a man I am! I am on the rampage now, and I will drink! I am not afraid of anybody. I am telling you the truth — Why should I be afraid of them, darn it! That's what! There was a pope who used to tell me that the devil is a braggart, — the moment you begin to brag, you lose your courage. And the moment you lose your courage before people, the devil grabs you and jams you where he has a mind to. As I am not afraid of people, I live an easy life. I'll spit into his beard, with his claws, — and on the mother of his brood of pigs! Here, chaw at it!

NIKÍTA (*crossing himself*). How foolish it was of me! (*Throwing away the rope.*)

MÍTRICH. What?

NIKÍTA (*rising*). You say I ought not to be afraid of people?

MÍTRICH. What is there to be afraid of, darn it! Look at them in the bath-house! They are all made of the same dough. One has a bigger belly than another —

that is all the difference between them. So, whom are you to be afraid of? Pea-pie choke them!

SCENE XI. Nikíta, Mítrich, and Matréna (*coming out of the yard*).

MATRÉNA (*calling*). Well, are you coming?

NIKÍTA. Oh! Yes, it is better this way! I am coming! (*Goes toward the yard.*)

*Curtain.*

## PART II.

*Change of scenery. The room, as in the First Act, is full of people, sitting at tables, and standing. In the fore corner, Akulína and her husband. On a table are images and bread. Among the guests are Marína, her husband, and the officer. Women sing songs; Anísya serves the liquor. The songs stop.*

SCENE I. Anísya, Marína, Marína's Husband, Akulína, her Bridegroom, Driver, Officer, Bridegroom's Mother, Best Man, Matréna, Guests, and people.

DRIVER. It is time to start, — the church is far off.

BEST MAN. Just let the stepfather bless them. Where is he?

ANÍSYA. He will be here in a minute, my dear, he will. Take another glass, — don't refuse me!

BRIDEGROOM'S MOTHER. What keeps him away? We have been waiting so long.

ANÍSYA. He will come, — in a minute. He will be here before a clean-shaven girl will have plaited her braids. Take another glass, my dear guests! (*Serves them.*) He will be here at once. Pretty girls, sing another song in the meantime!

DRIVER. They have sung all the songs waiting for him. (*The women sing. During the song enter Nikíta and Akím.*)

SCENE II. The same, Nikíta, and Akím.

NIKÍTA (*holding Akím by his hand and pushing him before himself*). Go, father! I can't do it without you.

AKÍM. I don't like it, so to speak —

NIKÍTA (*to the women*). Stop your singing! (*Surveying everybody in the room.*) Marína, are you here?

BRIDEGROOM'S MOTHER. Take the image and bless them!

NIKÍTA. Wait, give me a chance! (*Looking around him.*) Akulína, are you here?

BRIDEGROOM'S MOTHER. Why are you calling up all the people? Where else is she to be? How strange he is —

ANÍSIA. O Lord! He is undressed.

NIKÍTA. Father, are you here? Look at me! Orthodox people, you are all here, and so am I! Here I am! (*Kneeling down.*)

ANÍSIA. Nikíta, what is the matter with you? Oh, my head!

BRIDEGROOM'S MOTHER. Well, I declare!

MATRÉNA. I say he has drunk too much French wine. Come to your senses! What is the matter with you? (*People try to lift him, but he pays no attention to anybody, and keeps looking in front of him.*)

NIKÍTA. Orthodox people! I am guilty, and I want to make my confession.

MATRÉNA (*pulling him by the shoulder*). What is the matter with you? Are you insane? Dear people, he is out of his mind, — we ought to take him away.

NIKÍTA (*brushing her aside with his shoulder*). Leave me alone! Father, listen to me! First of all, Marína,

look toward me! (*Bowing to her and getting up.*) I am guilty toward you: I had promised to marry you, and I seduced you. I deceived you and abandoned you,—forgive me for Christ's sake! (*Again bows to her to the ground.*)

ANÍSYA. What are you raving about? How indecent! Nobody is asking you about it. Get up and stop disgracing yourself!

MATRÉNA. Oh, oh, he is bewitched. What is the matter with him? He has the evil eye upon him. Get up and stop talking nonsense! (*Pulls him.*)

NIKÍTA (*shaking his head*). Don't touch me! Forgive me, Marína! I have sinned toward you. Forgive me, for Christ's sake! (*Marína covers her face with her hands and keeps silent.*)

ANÍSYA. Get up, I say, and stop disgracing yourself! Don't recall the past! Don't act like that! Shame on you! Oh, my head! He must be insane.

NIKÍTA (*pushing away his wife and turning to Akulína*). Akulína, now I have something to say to you. Listen, Orthodox people! I am a wretched sinner. Akulína, I am guilty toward you! Your father did not die a natural death. He was poisoned.

ANÍSYA (*shouting*). My head! What is he talking about?

MATRÉNA. He is beside himself. Take him away! (*People walk up toward him, wishing to take him away.*)

AKÍM (*warding them off*). Wait! Good men, wait, so to speak!

NIKÍTA. Akulína, I poisoned him. Forgive me, for Christ's sake!

AKULÍNA (*jumping up*). He is lying. I know who has poisoned him.

BRIDEGROOM'S MOTHER. Stop! Sit down!

AKÍM. O Lord! The sin, the sin!

OFFICER. Take him! Send for the elder and the

posse! I must write up a protocol. Get up and come over here!

AKÍM (*to the officer*). You, bright-buttons, so to speak, wait awhile, so to speak! Give him a chance, so to speak, to tell everything!

OFFICER (*to Akím*). You, old man, look out, and don't interfere! I must write up a protocol.

AKÍM. What a queer fellow, so to speak, you are! Wait, I say! Don't talk now about the protocol! God's business, so to speak, is being done here — a man is making his confession, so to speak, and he talks about the protocol, so to speak —

OFFICER. Send for the elder!

AKÍM. Let him first attend to God's business, so to speak, and then you may attend to yours, so to speak!

NIKÍTA. Akulína, there is another sin I have committed toward you. I have seduced you, — forgive me, for Christ's sake! (*Bows to the ground before her.*)

AKULÍNA (*coming out from behind the table*). Let me go, — I will not be married! He compelled me to, — but now I won't!

OFFICER. Repeat what you have said!

NIKÍTA. Wait, Mr. Officer! Let me finish first!

AKÍM (*in transport*). Speak, my child! Tell everything, and you will feel better! Repent you before God, and don't be afraid of people! God is the main thing, God!

NIKÍTA. I killed your father, and I, dog, have ruined his daughter. I had the power over her, and I killed also her baby.

AKULÍNA. That is true, that is true!

NIKÍTA. I choked the baby to death with a board. I sat down upon it — I choked it — and its bones crunched. (*Weeping.*) Then I buried it in the ground. I did it, all by myself.

AKULÍNA. He is lying. I told him to.

NIKÍTA. Don't shield me! I am not afraid of anybody now! Forgive me, Orthodox people! (*Bows to the ground.*)

(*Silence.*)

OFFICER. Bind him! Your wedding is evidently broken up. (*People come up with their belts.*)

NIKÍTA. Wait awhile, — you will have time enough. (*Bowing to the ground before his father.*) Father dear! Forgive me, sinful man! You told me, when I first started on this life of debauch: "When the claw is caught, the whole bird is lost," but I, dog, did not pay any attention to you, and so everything turned out as you said. Forgive me, for Christ's sake!

AKÍM (*in transport*). God will forgive you, my own child! (*Embraces him.*) You did not pity yourself, but He will. God is the main thing, God!

SCENE III. The same and the Elder.

ELDER (*enter*). We have a posse here.

OFFICER. We will hold the inquest at once. (*Nikita is being bound.*)

AKULÍNA (*walking up and standing near him.*) I will tell the truth! Ask me, too!

NIKÍTA (*bound*). There is nothing to ask. I have done it all myself. It was my plan, and my deed. Lead me where I belong! I sha'n't say another word!

*Curtain.*





THE FRUITS OF ENLIGHT-  
ENMENT

Comedy in Four Acts

1889



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH ZVYEZDÍNTSEV, an ex-lieutenant of the Horse-Guards, owner of twenty-four thousand desyatínas in various Governments. A well-preserved man, about sixty years of age,—a meek, pleasant gentleman. Believes in spiritualism and likes to amuse others with his stories.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA ZVYEZDÍNTSEV, his wife, a plump woman who is trying to appear young. Worrying about worldly proprieties, despising her husband, and blindly trusting her doctor. An irritable lady.

BETSY, their daughter, a worldly girl, about twenty years of age, with loose manners, imitating men, in eye-glasses. A coquette and a giggler. Speaks very rapidly and very distinctly, compressing her lips, like a foreigner.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH, their son, twenty-five years old, a bachelor of law, without any special occupation, a member of a bicycle, a racing, and a kennel club. A young man enjoying excellent health and imperturbable self-confidence. Speaks aloud and by jerks. He is either entirely in earnest, almost gloomy, or noisily vivacious, and laughs loud.

PROFESSOR ALEKSYÉY VLADÍMIROVICH KRUGOSVYÉTLOV, a savant, about fifty years of age, with quiet, pleasantly self-confident manners and a similarly hesitating and chanting speech. Likes to talk. He treats with gentle contempt those who do not agree with him. Smokes much. A lean, mobile man.

DOCTOR, about forty, a healthy, stout, red-faced man. Loud and coarse. All the time smiles with self-satisfaction.

MÁRYA KONSTANTÍNOVNA, a maiden of about twenty, a graduate of a conservatory, teacher of music, with tufts of hair over her brow, in an exaggeratedly fashionable attire, flattering and easily confused.

PETRÍSHCHEV, about twenty-eight years of age, bachelor of philology, in search of an activity, member of the same societies as Vasíli Leonídych, and, in addition, of the society for promoting chintz and calico evening parties. Bald, quick in his movements and speech, and extremely polite.

BARONESS, a distinguished lady about fifty, indolent, speaks without intonations.

PRINCESS, a lady of the world, guest.

YOUNG PRINCESS, a young lady of the world, finical, guest.

COUNTESS, an ancient lady, barely moving about, with false hair and teeth.

GROSSMANN, dark-complexioned, of a Jewish type, very mobile, nervous, speaks very loud.

MÁRYA VASÍLEVNA TOLBÚKHIN, a very stout lady, very dignified, rich, and good-natured; acquainted with all remarkable people, past and present. Speaks very fast, trying to outtalk everybody else. Smokes.

BARON KLÍNGEN (COCO), a graduate of the St. Petersburg University, a Junker of the chamber, serving with an embassy. Very correct, and therefore composed and calmly gay.

A LADY.

A GENTLEMAN (*without words*).

SERGYÉY IVÁNOVICH SAKHÁTOV, about fifty years old, ex-associate minister, an elegant gentleman, of broad European culture; has no special occupation, but is interested in everything. Holds himself with dignity and even somewhat severely.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH, valet, about sixty years old, an educated man, fond of culture. Misuses his eye-glasses and handkerchief, which he unfolds slowly. Interested in politics. An intelligent and kind man.

GRIGÓRI, lackey, twenty-eight years old, fine-looking, dissipated, envious, and bold.

YÁKOV, butler, about forty, zealous, good-natured, living only for his family interests in the village.

SEMÉN, peasant of the pantry, about twenty years old, a healthy, fresh country lad, blond, without a beard, quiet, smiling.

COACHMAN, thirty-five years old, a fop, wearing moustache only, coarse and determined.

OLD COOK, forty-five years old, shaggy, unshaven, bloated, yellow, trembling, in a torn nankeen summer overcoat, dirty trousers, and torn boots; speaks hoarsely; the words escape from him as though over an impediment.

WOMAN COOK, great talker, dissatisfied, about thirty years old.

PORTER, ex-soldier.

TÁNYA, chambermaid, about nineteen years old, energetic, strong, merry, and quickly passing from one mood to another. Squeaks in moments of strong excitement from joy.

FIRST PEASANT, about sixty years old; has been an elder, thinks that he knows how to treat gentlemen, and likes to hear himself talk.

SECOND PEASANT, about forty-five years old, rude and truthful; does not like to say more than is necessary. Semén's father.

THIRD PEASANT, about seventy years old, in bast shoes, nervous, restless, in haste; easily embarrassed, and covering up his embarrassment by talking.

FIRST FOOTMAN of the countess, an old-fashioned old man, with a lackey's pride.



SECOND FOOTMAN, huge, robust, rude.

SHOP MESSENGER, in a blue sleeveless coat, with a fresh ruddy face. Speaks firmly, impressively, and clearly.

Action takes place in the capital, in Zvyezdintsev's house.

# THE FRUITS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

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## ACT I.

*The stage represents the antechamber of a rich house in Moscow. Three doors: the outer, into Leóníd Fédorovich's private cabin, and into Vasíli Leonídych's room. A staircase leading to the upper rooms; back of it, a passage to the butler's pantry.*

SCENE I. Grigóri (*a young, handsome lackey, looking in the mirror and primping himself*).

GRIGÓRI. I am sorry for my moustache. She says a moustache is not good for a lackey. Why? That you may see that I am a lackey, or else I might look finer than her darling son. Who is he, anyway? Even though I am without a moustache, he can't come up to me — (*Looking in the mirror, smiling.*) What a lot of women are after me! But I do not like any of them as much as Tánya — A simple chambermaid, yes, but she is finer than any lady! (*Smiling.*) And so sweet! (*Listening.*) There she is herself! (*Smiling.*) Just hear her strike the floor with her heels! Whew!

SCENE II. Grigóri and Tánya (*in fur coat and half-shoes*).

GRIGÓRI. My respect to Tatyána Makárovna!

TÁNYA. What, are you looking at yourself? You imagine you are very good-looking!

GRIGÓRI. Why, am I not?

TÁNYA. Neither good, nor bad-looking, just half and half. What are the furs doing here?

GRIGÓRI. I shall take them away at once, madam. (*Takes down a fur coat and covers Tánya with it, embracing her.*) Tánya, let me tell you—

TÁNYA. Go to! What does this look like? (*Angrily tearing herself away.*) I tell you, leave me alone!

GRIGÓRI (*looking around*). Kiss me!

TÁNYA. What makes you bother me so much? I will give you a kiss!— (*Raises her hand to strike him.*)

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH (*behind the stage a bell is rung, and then a voice is heard*). Grigóri!

TÁNYA. Go! Vasíli Leonídych is calling you.

GRIGÓRI. He will wait: he has just opened his eyes. Tell me, why do you not love me?

TÁNYA. Don't talk about any of your loves! I do not love anybody.

GRIGÓRI. It is not so. You love Semén. A fine fellow to love! A black-handed peasant of the pantry!

TÁNYA. Let him be what he may,—but you are envious.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH (*behind the scene*). Grigóri!

GRIGÓRI. Wait!—What have I to be envious of? You have just begun your education, and see with whom you are keeping company! It would be different if you loved me—Tánya—

TÁNYA (*angrily and sternly*). I tell you, you must not expect a thing.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH (*behind the scene*). Grigóri!

GRIGÓRI. You are dreadfully strict.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH (*behind the scene, cries stubbornly, evenly, and at the top of his voice*). Grigóri! Grigóri! Grigóri! (*Tánya and Grigóri laugh.*)

GRIGÓRI. You ought to see the women that have been loving me! (*Bell.*)

TÁNYA. Go to the master, and leave me alone!

GRIGÓRI. You are foolish, when you come to think of it. I am not Semén!

TÁNYA. Semén wants to marry, and does not think of foolishness —

SCENE III. Grigóri, Tánya, and Messenger (*carrying a large paper box with a dress*).

MESSANGER. Good morning to you!

GRIGÓRI. Good morning. From whom is it?

MESSANGER. From Bourdier, with a dress. Here is a note to the lady.

TÁNYA (*taking the note*). Sit down here! I will take it in. (*Exit.*)

SCENE IV. Grigóri, Messenger, and Vasíli Leonídych (*putting his head out of the door, in his shirt and slippers*).

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Grigóri!

GRIGÓRI. Immediately.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Grigóri, do you not hear me?

GRIGÓRI. I have just come in.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Hot water and tea!

GRIGÓRI. Semén will bring it in a minute.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. What is this? From Bourdier?

MESSANGER. Yes, sir. (*Vasíli Leonídych and Grigóri exeunt. Bell.*)

SCENE V. Messenger and Tánya (*running in to answer the bell*).

TÁNYA (*to the messenger*). Wait!

MESSENGER. That's what I have been doing.

SCENE VI. Messenger, Tánya, and Sakhátov (*walks in through the door*).

TÁNYA. Pardon me, the lackey has just gone out. But please, let me help you! (*Takes off his fur coat.*)

SAKHÁTOV (*adjusting his clothes*). Is Leoníd Fédorovich at home? Is he up? (*Bell.*)

TÁNYA. Certainly. Long ago.

SCENE VII. Messenger, Tánya, Sakhátov, and Doctor (*entering*).

DOCTOR (*looking for the lackey. Seeing Sakhátov, with familiarity*). Ah, my respects to you!

SAKHÁTOV (*looking fixedly at him*). I think you are the doctor?

DOCTOR. I thought you were abroad. Coming to see Leoníd Fédorovich?

SAKHÁTOV. Yes. What are you doing here? Anybody ill?

DOCTOR (*laughing*). Not exactly ill, but, you know — these ladies are in a bad shape. They play cards every day until three o'clock in the morning, and then they take to the wine-glass. The lady is stout and fat, and not so very young, either.

SAKHÁTOV. Do you tell your diagnosis to Anna Pávlovna? I should think she would not like it.

DOCTOR (*laughing*). But it is the truth. They do all these things, and then there is a disorder of the digestive organs, pressure on the liver, the nerves, — and all that

rigmarole, and I have to mend them. Lots of trouble with them. (*Laughing.*) And you? You are a spiritualist yourself, I think.

SAKHÁTOV. I? No, I am not a spiritualist myself — Well, my respects to you! (*Wants to go, but the doctor stops him.*)

DOCTOR. No, I do not myself absolutely deny, when such a man as Krugosvyétlov takes part in it. How could I? A professor, — a European celebrity! There must be something in it. I should like to take a look at it, but I never have any time, — there is always something else to do.

SAKHÁTOV. Yes, yes. My respects to you! (*Walks away, with a light bow.*)

DOCTOR (*to Tányá*). Is she up?

TÁNYA. In the chamber. If you please. (*Sakhátov and the doctor go in different directions.*)

SCENE VIII. Messenger, Tányá, and Fédor Iványch (*entering with a newspaper in his hands*).

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH (*to the messenger*). What are you doing here?

MESSENGER. I am from Bourdier, with a dress and a note. I was told to wait.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Ah, from Bourdier! (*To Tányá.*) Who has come?

TÁNYA. Sergyéy Iványch Sakhátov, and the doctor. They stood here awhile talking all about the spirituality.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH (*correcting her*). About spiritualism.

TÁNYA. That's what I say, about the spirituality. Did you hear, Fédor Iványch, how well it all went last time? (*Laughing.*) There were raps, and things flew about.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. How do you know?

TÁNYA. Lizavéta Leoníдовna told me.



SCENE IX. Tánya, Fédor Iványch, Messenger, and Yákov, the butler (*running in with a glass of tea*).

YÁKOV (*to the messenger*). Good morning!

MESSENGER (*sadly*). Good morning! (*Yákov raps at Vasíli Leonídych's door*.)

SCENE X. The same and Grigóri.

GRIGÓRI. Let me have it!

YÁKOV. You have not brought yesterday's glasses back, and the tray is still in Vasíli Leonídych's room. I shall be responsible for it.

GRIGÓRI. The tray is filled with cigars.

YÁKOV. Put them elsewhere! I shall have to answer for it.

GRIGÓRI. I will bring it, I will.

YÁKOV. You say you will bring it, but you don't. The other day they asked for it, and I had nothing to serve on.

GRIGÓRI. I say I will bring it. What zeal!

YÁKOV. It is easy for you to say so, but this is the third time I have to serve tea, and get ready for breakfast. I am kept busy all day long. Who in the house has more work to do than I? And still I am no good!

GRIGÓRI. What better could there be? You are very good!

TÁNYA. Nobody is good enough for you, but you yourself.

GRIGÓRI (*to Tánya*). Nobody asked you! (*Exit*.)

SCENE XI. Tánya, Yákov, Fédor Iványch, and Messenger.

YÁKOV. No, I don't complain — Tatyána Márkovna, did the lady not say anything about yesterday?

TÁNYA. About the lamp?

YÁKOV. God knows how it escaped from my hands. I just began to wipe it off and wanted to put my hand around it, when it jumped out and broke into tiny bits. What a misfortune! It is easy enough for Grigóri Mikhálych to talk the way he does, for he is a single man, but I have a family — I have to think about everything, and feed them. Work does not trouble me — So she did not say anything? Well, thank God! — Fédor Iványch, have you one spoon or two?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. One, one! (*Reading the newspaper. Yákov exit.*)

SCENE XII. Tánya, Fédor Iványch, and Messenger.  
*Bell is rung. Enter Grigóri with tray, and Porter.*

PORTER (*to Grigóri*). Announce to the master that the peasants from the village are here!

GRIGÓRI (*pointing to Fédor Iványch*). Tell the valet! I have no time. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XIII. Tánya, Fédor Iványch, Porter, and Messenger.

TÁNYA. Where are the peasants from?

PORTER. From the Government of Kursk, I think.

TÁNYA (*squeaking*). It is they — Semén's father, — about the land. I will go and meet them. (*Running away.*)

SCENE XIV. Fédor Iványch, Porter, and Messenger.

PORTER. What do you say? Shall I let them in here or what? They say they have come in regard to the land, — the master knows.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Yes, about the purchase of the land.

Yes, yes. He has a guest just now. You tell them to wait.

PORTER. Where shall they wait?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Let them wait in the courtyard. I will send for them. (*Porter exit.*)

SCENE XV. Fédor Iványch, Tánya, *followed by three peasants, Grigóri, and Messenger.*

TÁNYA. To the right. This way, this way!

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. I have ordered you not to let them in.

GRIGÓRI. There you have it, hussy!

TÁNYA. It will not harm, Fédor Iványch! They will stand at the very edge.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. They will bring in dirt.

TÁNYA. They have cleaned their shoes, and I will clean up. (*To the peasants.*) You stand here!

(*Enter the peasants, carrying presents in kerchiefs: white loaves, eggs, towels. They are trying to find something to cross themselves by. Cross themselves at the staircase, bow to Fédor Iványch, and take a firm stand.*)

GRIGÓRI (*to Fédor Iványch*). Fédor Iványch! They say that Pironet's half-shoes are the latest fashion, but this fellow has better ones! (*Pointing to the Third Peasant in bast shoes.*)

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. You must always make fun of people. (*Grigóri exit.*)

SCENE XVI. Tánya, Fédor Iványch, Messenger, and three peasants.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH (*rising and walking over to the peasants*). So you are from Kursk, and have come in regard to the purchase of the land?

FIRST PEASANT. Yes, sir. It originates, you may take it, in regard to the accomplishment of the land purchase that we are here. Can't you announce us?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Yes, yes, I know, I know. Wait here, I will announce you at once. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XVII. Tánya, Messenger, and three peasants.

Vasíli Leonídych (*behind the scene*). *The peasants look around, not knowing what to do with their presents.*

FIRST PEASANT. Where, then, so to speak, I do not know what to call it, is the thing to put it on? Let us do it according to regulations. Can't you let us have a dish, or something?

TÁNYA. Immediately, immediately. Let me have them; in the meanwhile I will place them here. (*Puts the presents on a small sofa.*)

FIRST PEASANT. Of what standing, for example, is the worthy one who came up to us?

TÁNYA. It is the vally.

FIRST PEASANT. That's simple enough, — volly. This means that he is, so to speak, in charge of things — (*To Tánya.*) And you, for example, are also in the service?

TÁNYA. I am a chambermaid. I am myself from Démen. I know you and you, only this uncle I do not know. (*Pointing to the Third Peasant.*)

THIRD PEASANT. These you have recognized, and can't you recognize me?

TÁNYA. Are you Efím Antónych?

FIRST PEASANT. In rivalry.

TÁNYA. And are you Semén's father, Zákhar Trifónych?

SECOND PEASANT. Correct!

THIRD PEASANT. And I am, you know, Mítri Chilíkin. Do you recognize me now?

TÁNYA. Now I know you, too.

SECOND PEASANT. Whose are you ?

TÁNYA. I am the orphan child of Aksínya, the soldier's widow.

FIRST AND THIRD PEASANTS (*in wonderment*). Well !

SECOND PEASANT. Not in vain they say : Pay a penny for a pig, put him in the rye, and he will grow big.

FIRST PEASANT. In rivalry. Something like a mam-zelle.

THIRD PEASANT. That's so. O Lord !

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH (*rings the bell behind the scene, and then cries*). Grigóri ! Grigóri !

FIRST PEASANT. Who is disturbing you so much, for example ?

TÁNYA. This is the young master.

THIRD PEASANT. O Lord ! He said we had better wait on the outside. (*Silence.*)

SECOND PEASANT. Is Semén going to marry you ?

TÁNYA. Has he written you about it ? (*Covers herself with the apron.*)

SECOND PEASANT. You see he has ! He is not doing right. I see the lad is getting spoiled.

TÁNYA (*lively*). No, he is not at all spoiled. Shall I send him to you ?

SECOND PEASANT. What is the use of sending for him ? There will be plenty of time !

(*There are heard the desperate cries of Vasíli Leonídych : "Grigóri, the devil take you !" )*

SCENE XVIII. The same and (*in the door*) Vasíli Leonídych (*in shirt, putting on his eye-glasses*).

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Are they all dead ?

TÁNYA. He is not here, Vasíli Leonídych — I will send him at once. (*Goes toward the door.*)

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. I hear some voices here. Who are these scarecrows ? Eh ?







TÁNYA. These are peasants from the Kursk village, Vasíli Leonídych!

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH (*to the messenger*). And who is that? Oh, yes, from Bourdier!

(*The peasants bow. Vasíli Leonídych pays no attention to them. Grigóri meets Tánya at the door. Tánya remains.*)

SCENE XIX. The same and Grigóri.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. I told you the other shoes! I cannot wear these!

GRIGÓRI. The others are standing there, too.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Where?

GRIGÓRI. In the same place.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. You are lying.

GRIGÓRI. You will see for yourself. (*Vasíli Leonídych and Grigóri exeunt.*)

SCENE XX. Tánya, three peasants, and Messenger.

THIRD PEASANT. Maybe, let me say, it is not time now, and we had better go to our lodging and wait awhile.

TÁNYA. No, never mind, just wait. I will bring you at once some plates for the presents. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XXI. The same, Sakhátov, Leoníd Fédorovich, followed by Fédor Iványch.

(*The peasants pick up the presents and strike an attitude.*)

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH (*to the peasants*). In a minute, in a minute, just wait! (*To the messenger.*) And who is this?

MESSANGER. From Bourdier.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Ah, from Bourdier.

SAKHÁTOV (*smiling*). I do not deny. But you will admit that, not having seen all that of which you speak, it is hard for one of our kind, who are not initiated in the matter, to believe it.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. You say you cannot believe it. But we do not even demand faith. We demand that you investigate it. How can I help not believing in this ring? I received my ring from there.

SAKHÁTOV. From there? From where?

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. From the other world. Yes.

SAKHÁTOV (*smiling*). Very interesting! Very interesting!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Granted, you think that I am easily carried away, that I imagine that which is not; but Aleksyéy Vladímirovich Krugosvyétlov is not so easily to be brushed aside, — he is a professor, and he acknowledges all that. Nor is he alone in this. And Crooks? And Wallace?

SAKHÁTOV. I do not deny. All I say is that it is very interesting. It would be interesting to know how Krugosvyétlov explains it.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. He has a theory of his own. Come to see us this evening. At first Grossman will — you know he is a famous mind-reader.

SAKHÁTOV. Yes, I have heard of him, but have never had a chance of seeing him.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. So come! At first Grossman, and then Kápchich, and our mediumistic séance — (*To Iványch*). Has the messenger come back from Kápchich?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Not yet.

SAKHÁTOV. How am I to find out?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Come, come all the same! If Kápchich will not come, we will find another medium. Márya Ignátevna is a medium, not so strong as Kápchich, but still a medium.

SCENE XXII. The same *and Tánya (coming with the plates for the presents. Listening to the conversation).*

SAKHÁTOV (*smiling*). Yes, yes. Here is a circumstance that puzzles me: why are the mediums always from what we would call the educated class? Both Kápchich and Márya Ignátevna. If it is a special power they possess, it ought to be met with everywhere, even among peasants.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. And so it is. This occurs quite often: we have a peasant in our house who has proved to be a medium. The other day we called him in during the séance. It was necessary to move a divan, and we had all forgotten about him. He had evidently fallen asleep. And just imagine: our séance was over, Kápchich awoke, and suddenly we noticed mediumistic manifestations in the other corner of the room, near the peasant, — the table moved.

TÁNYA (*aside*). That was when I crawled out from under the table.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Apparently he, too, is a medium, — the more so since he resembles Hume in face — Do you remember Hume? The naïve blond.

SAKHÁTOV (*shrugging his shoulders*). I declare! This is very interesting. Then you ought to test him.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. We are testing him. But he is not the only one. There are no end of mediums. We simply do not know them. Only the other day a sickly old woman moved a stone wall.

SAKHÁTOV. Moved a stone wall?

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Yes, yes. She was lying in bed and did not at all know that she was a medium. She pressed her hand against the wall, and the wall gave way.

SAKHÁTOV. And did not cave in?

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. And did not cave in.

SAKHÁTOV. Strange — Well, I will be here in the evening.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Do come! There will be a séance in any case.

(*Sakhátov puts on his overcoat. Leoníd Fédorovich sees him out.*)

SCENE XXIII. The same, *without* Sakhátov.

MESSENGER (*to Tánia*). Tell the lady! Am I to stay here overnight?

TÁNIA. Wait a little! She is going to drive out with the young lady, and so she will be out soon. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XXIV. The same, *without* Tánia.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH (*walks over to the peasants. The peasants bow and offer him the presents*). There is no need of that!

FIRST PEASANT (*smiling*). This originates from our first duty. Thus even the Commune has ordered us.

SECOND PEASANT. This is the proper thing.

THIRD PEASANT. Don't mention it! Because we are very much satisfied — As our parents, let me say, served your parents, even thus we wish with all our hearts, and not merely — (*Bows.*)

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. What is it? What is it you want?

FIRST PEASANT. We have come to your Grace, so to speak.

SCENE XXV. The same *and* Petríshchev (*quickly runs in in his overcoat*).

PETRÍSHCHEV. Is Vasíli Leonídych up? (*Seeing Leoníd Fédorovich, he bows to him with his head only.*)

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Are you going to my son?

PETRÍSHCHEV. I? Yes, I want to see Vovó for a minute.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Go on, go on!

*(Petríshchev takes off his overcoat and walks away rapidly.)*

SCENE XXVI. The same, *without* Petríshchev.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH *(to the peasants)*. Yes. Well, so what do you want?

SECOND PEASANT. Accept our presents!

FIRST PEASANT *(smiling)*. So to speak, the country prepositions.

THIRD PEASANT. Don't even mention it! We greet you as a father. So, don't mention it!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Well — Fédor, receive these things!

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Well, give them to me! *(Takes the presents.)*

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Now, what business is it?

FIRST PEASANT. We have come to your Grace.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. I see you have come to see me. But what do you wish?

FIRST PEASANT. To make a motion in regard to the accomplishment of the sale of the land. It originates —

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. What is it? Are you buying land?

FIRST PEASANT. In rivalry, it is so. It originates — So to speak in regard to the purchase of the proprietorship of land. Thus, for example, the Commune has inpowered us to enter it, so to speak, as is proper, through the government bank, with adhesion of a stamp of the legalized date.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. That is, you wish to buy land through the bank, — am I right?



FIRST PEASANT. That is as you had made the preposition to us last year. It originates, so to speak, from the sum in its totality of 32,864 roubles for the purchase of the proprietorship of the land.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. That is so. How about the pay?

FIRST PEASANT. In respect to the pay the Commune preposes, as has been said last year, to depone, so to speak, the reception of the cash, by the laws of the statutes, in the totality of four thousand roubles.

SECOND PEASANT. That is, you will get four thousand now, and for the rest you are to wait.

THIRD PEASANT (*unrolling the money*). You may be sure we will pawn ourselves, but we will not do, let me say, in any slipshod manner, but, let me say, so to speak, as is proper.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. But I wrote to you that I should be willing only in case you had collected all the money.

FIRST PEASANT. This would, in rivalry, be pleasanter, but it is not in the possibilities, so to speak.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. I cannot help it.

FIRST PEASANT. The Commune, for example, has been relaying on your preposition of last year to depone the payment —

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. That was last year; then I was willing, but now I cannot —

SECOND PEASANT. How is that? You had given us hope, and we had the paper written up, and the money collected.

THIRD PEASANT. Have pity on us, father. Our land is small, there is not enough room to drive out a cow, nay, not even a chick, let me say. (*Bows.*) Don't sin, father! (*Bows.*)

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. I must say it is true that I was willing last year to postpone the payment, but something has happened — and so it is not convenient for me now.

SECOND PEASANT. Without the land we shall have to give up living.

FIRST PEASANT. In rivalry, without the land our domicility must weaken and ruin will originate.

THIRD PEASANT (*bowing*). Father! The land is small: there is no place to drive out a cow, nay, not even a chick. Father, have pity on us! Accept the money, father!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH (*in the meanwhile looks through the document*). I understand. I should like to do you a kindness. Wait. I will give you an answer in half an hour — Fédor, tell them not to receive anybody.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Very well. (*Leoníd Fédorovich exit.*)

SCENE XXVII. The same, *without* Leoníd Fédorovich.  
(*The peasants are downcast.*)

SECOND PEASANT. What a business! He says: "Hand us the whole amount!" Where shall we take it from?

FIRST PEASANT. If he had not given us hope last year. For we have, in rivalry, been relaying on what he told us last year.

THIRD PEASANT. O Lord! I had already unrolled the money. (*Wraps up the money.*) What are we going to do now?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. What is the matter with you?

FIRST PEASANT. Our business, honourable man, depends, for example, like this: he had proposed to us last year to depone the payments. The Commune met in opinion and inpowered us; and now, for example, he preposes to give him the whole sum in totality. But the business comes out impossibly.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. How much money is it?

FIRST PEASANT. The whole sum in entrance is four thousand roubles, so to speak.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Well, hump yourselves and get some more!

FIRST PEASANT. We have collected this with difficulty. There is not enough powder for these considerations, sir.

SECOND PEASANT. When there is none, you can't get it with your teeth.

THIRD PEASANT. We should like to, but, we will say, we have swept this up with a broom, as it is.

SCENE XXVIII. The same, Vasíli Leonídych, and Petríshchev (*at the door, both with cigarettes*).

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. I told you I would try. I will do my level best. Ah, what?

PETRÍSHCHEV. You must know that if you do not get it, the devil knows what a nasty affair it will be!

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. I told you I would try, and I will. Ah, what?

PETRÍSHCHEV. Nothing. I only say I want you to be sure and get it. I will wait. (*Goes away, closing the door.*)

SCENE XXIX. The same, *without Petríshchev*.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH (*waving his hand*). The devil knows what it is!

(*The peasants bow.*)

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH (*looking at the messenger. To Fédor Iványch*). Why don't you let off this man from Bourdier? He has come to stay here. Look there, he is asleep. Ah, what?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. He brought a note — He was told to wait until Anna Pávlovna would come out.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH (*looking at the peasants and gazing at the money*). What is this, — money? For whom?

Money for us? (*To Fédor Iváných.*) Who are these people?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. The Kursk peasants. They have come to buy land.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Is it sold?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. No, they have not come to any agreement yet. They are stingy.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Ah? I must persuade them. (*To the peasants.*) Well, are you buying, ah?

FIRST PEASANT. In rivalry we propose as to how to acquire the ownership of the possession of land.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. You must not be too stingy. You know, I will tell you how a peasant needs the land! Ah, what? Does he need it very much?

FIRST PEASANT. In rivalry, the land is necessitous to a peasant, A number one. That is so.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Well, then don't be so stingy. What is the land? You may sow the wheat in rows upon it. You can take three hundred puds, at a rouble a pud, which is three hundred roubles. Ah, what? And if you plant mint, you can skin a thousand roubles out of a desyatína, I tell you.

FIRST PEASANT. In rivalry, this is complete,—all the produces may be advanced into action, if one has a comprehension.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Then sow mint by all means. I have studied it. They print that way in books. I will show it to you. Ah, what?

FIRST PEASANT. In rivalry, regardly this subject,—you can see better in books. It is intelligentness, so to speak.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Buy it then, and don't be so stingy! Give the money! (*To Fédor Iváných.*) Where is papa?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. At home. He asked not to be disturbed now.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Well, I suppose he is asking the spirit whether to sell the land or not. Ah, what?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. I can't say. I know that he went away in indecision.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. What do you think, Fédor Iványch, has he any money? Ah, what?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. I don't know. Hardly. Why do you want to know? You took a good slice of it last week!

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. But I gave that away for the dogs. You know we have a new society: Petríshchev has been elected, and I have taken some money from Petríshchev, so I have to pay now for him and for myself. Ah, what?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. What kind of a new society is it? Of bicyclists?

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. No. I will tell you in a minute: it is a new society. Let me tell you, a very serious society. And do you know who is the president of it? Ah, what?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. What does this new society consist in?

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. A society for the encouragement of breeding ancient Russian stout-bodied dogs. Ah, what? Let me tell you: to-day is the first meeting and a lunch. And I have no money. I will go to him, and will try. (*Exit through the door.*)

SCENE XXX. The peasants, Fédor Iványch, and Messenger.

FIRST PEASANT (*to Fédor Iványch*). Honourable man, who is this?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH (*smiling*). The young gentleman.

THIRD PEASANT. The heir, let us say. O Lord! (*Hides the money.*) I had better put it away in time.

FIRST PEASANT. We were told that he was a military man, in the meritoriousness of the cavalry, for example.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. No. Being an only son, he is free from military service.

THIRD PEASANT. He is left to take care of his parents, let us say. That is regular.

SECOND PEASANT (*shaking his head*). Nice care he will take of them!

THIRD PEASANT. O Lord!

SCENE XXXI. Fédor Iványch, three peasants, Vasíli Leonídych, and (*after him at the door*) Leoníd Fédorovich.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. It is always that way. Really it is wonderful. At first they say that I have no occupation, and when I find an activity and am busy, — a serious society has been founded pursuing noble aims, — you begrudge me some paltry three hundred roubles!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. I told you I could not, and that is the end of it. I have none.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. But you have sold the land!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. In the first place, I have not sold it; and, above everything else, leave me in peace! You were told that I was busy. (*Slams the door.*)

SCENE XXXII. The same, *without* Leoníd Fédorovich.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. I told you this was not the time for it.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. I tell you this is a bad business for me, ah? I will go to mamma, — this will be my only salvation. He is raving with his spiritualism, and is forgetting everybody. (*Goes up-stairs. Fédor Iványch sits down to read his paper.*)



SCENE XXXIII. The same. Betsy and Márya Konstantínovna come down-stairs, followed by Grigóri.

BETSY. Is the carriage ready ?

GRIGÓRI. It is driving up.

BETSY (*to Márya Konstantínovna*). Come, come ! I saw that it was he !

MÁRYA KONSTANTÍNOVNA. What he ?

BETSY. You know very well that it is Petríshchev.

MÁRYA KONSTANTÍNOVNA. Where is he ?

BETSY. He is sitting in Vovó's room. You will see yourself.

MÁRYA KONSTANTÍNOVNA. But suppose it is not he ? (*The peasants and the messenger bow.*)

BETSY (*to the messenger*). Ah, you are from Bourdier, with the dress ?

MESSENGER. Yes, madam. May I go now ?

BETSY. I do not know. This is for mamma.

MESSENGER. I do not know for whom. I was ordered to bring it here and get the money for it.

BETSY. Well, then wait !

MÁRYA KONSTANTÍNOVNA. Is this the same costume for the charade ?

BETSY. Yes, a superb costume ! But mamma does not take it, and does not wish to pay for it.

MÁRYA KONSTANTÍNOVNA. Why ?

BETSY. You ask mamma. For Vovó's dogs it is not too much to pay five hundred roubles, but for a dress one hundred is too much. I certainly can't play as a scarecrow ! (*To the peasants.*) Who are these ?

GRIGÓRI. Peasants. They have come to buy some land.

BETSY. I thought they were hunters. Are you not hunters ?

FIRST PEASANT. Not by any means, madam. We are here in regard to the accomplishment of the sale

of the transfer of the land. We came to see Leoníd Fédorovich.

BETSY. But how is that? I am sure hunters were to come for Vovó. Truly, you are no hunters? (*The peasants keep silent.*) How stupid they are! (*Walks over to the door.*) Vovó! (*Laughs.*)

MÁRYA KONSTANTÍNOVNA. We met him just a little while ago.

BETSY. Who asks you to remember that? Vovó, are you here?

SCENE XXXIV. The same and Petríshchev.

PETRÍSHCHEV. Vovó is not here, but I am ready to do all that is expected of him. Good morning! Good morning, Márya Konstantínovna! (*For a long time firmly presses Betsy's and then Márya Konstantínovna's hand.*)

SECOND PEASANT. I declare, he looks as though he were pumping water!

BETSY. You can't take his place, but still you are better than nothing. (*Laughing.*) What kind of business have you with Vovó?

PETRÍSHCHEV. Business? Fi-nancial business, that is, our business is fie! and at the same time nancial, besides being financial.

BETSY. What do you mean by nancial?

PETRÍSHCHEV. That is the question! The trick is it does not mean anything!

BETSY. Now, that was not a success, not at all! (*Laughs.*)

PETRÍSHCHEV. You can't make it a success every time. It is like a raffle. At first it is nothing, and again nothing, and then there is a prize.

(*Fédor Iványich walks into the cabinet of Leoníd Fédorovich.*)

SCENE XXXV. The same *without* Fédor Iványch.

BETSY. This was not a success. Tell me, were you yesterday at the Mergasóvs'?

PETRÍSHCHEV. Not so much at *mère Gasso*f as at *père Gasso*f, and not even *père Gasso*f as *fil*s *Gasso*f.

BETSY. Can't you get along without puns? It is a disease. Were there any gipsies there? (*Laughs.*)

PETRÍSHCHEV (*sings*). "Birds upon her apron fair, golden combs upon her hair!"

BETSY. How fortunate you are! It was so dull for us at Fofó's.

PETRÍSHCHEV (*continuing to chant*). "And she swore most solemnly, she would stay —" What is the rest? Márya Konstantínovna, what is the rest?

MÁRYA KONSTANTÍNOVNA. "An hour with me —"

PETRÍSHCHEV. How? How is it, Márya Konstantínovna? (*Laughs.*)

BETSY. *Cessez, vous devenez impossible!*

PETRÍSHCHEV. *J'ai cessé, j'ai bébé, j'ai dédé —*

BETSY. I see only one means of getting rid of your puns, and that is to make you sing. Let us go to Vovó's room! There is a guitar there. Come, Márya Konstantínovna, come!

(*Betsy, Márya Konstantínovna, and Petríshchev walk into the room of Vasíli Leonídych.*)

SCENE XXXVI. Grigóri, three peasants, and Messenger.

FIRST PEASANT. Who are these people?

GRIGÓRI. One is the young lady, and the other a mam-zelle who teaches music.

FIRST PEASANT. She promotes into science, so to speak. And how accurate she is, a regular portrait!

SECOND PEASANT. Why don't they marry them off? They are advanced in years, it seems.

GRIGÓRI. You expect them to marry at fifteen, as with you ?

FIRST PEASANT. And the man, for example, is a musicianist ?

GRIGÓRI (*mocking him*). A musicianist ! You do not understand a thing !

FIRST PEASANT. This is, in rivalry, our stupidity, so to speak, our ignorance.

THIRD PEASANT. O Lord !

(*Gipsy songs accompanied with a guitar are heard in Vasíli Leonídych's room.*)

SCENE XXXVII. Grigóri, three peasants, Messenger.

*Enter Semén and, after him, Tánya. (Tánya watches the meeting of father and son.)*

GRIGÓRI (*to Semén*). What do you want ?

SEMÉN. I was sent to Mr. Kápchich's.

GRIGÓRI. Well ?

SEMÉN. He gave me the oral message that he could not come under any consideration.

GRIGÓRI. All right. I will report so. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XXXVIII. The same, *without* Grigóri.

SEMÉN (*to his father*). You are welcome, father ! My respects to Uncle Efím and Uncle Mítri ! All well at home ?

SECOND PEASANT. Welcome, Semén !

FIRST PEASANT. Welcome, friend !

THIRD PEASANT. Welcome, lad ! Doing well ?

SEMÉN (*smiling*). Well, father, come and have some tea with me !

SECOND PEASANT. Wait till we get through here. Don't you see we are busy ?

SEMÉN. Very well, I will wait near the steps. (*Exit.*)

TÁNYA (*running after him*). Why did you not say anything?

SEMÉN. How could I say anything in presence of people? Give me a chance! I will tell him at tea. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XXXIX. The same, *without Semén.* (*Fédor Iványch comes out and sits down near the window with his newspaper.*)

FIRST PEASANT. Well, honourable man, how does our affair originate?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Wait! He will be out soon, he is getting through.

TÁNYA (*to Fédor Iványch*). How do you know he is getting through?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. I know, because when he gets through with a question he reads aloud the question and the answer.

TÁNYA. Is it true that you can talk with spirits by means of the saucer?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. It seems so.

TÁNYA. Will he sign if they tell him to?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Of course, he will.

TÁNYA. But they don't talk with words?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. No, by means of the alphabet. He notices opposite what letter it stops.

TÁNYA. Well, and if a séance?

SCENE XL. The same *and Leoníd Fédorovich.*

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Well, my friends, I can't. I should like to very much, but I can't by any means. If you had all the money, it would be different.

FIRST PEASANT. Nothing would be better in rivalry. But the people are not well-to-do, they can't do it.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. I can't, I can't by any means. Here is your paper. I can't sign it.

THIRD PEASANT. Father, pity us, take mercy on us!

SECOND PEASANT. Why do you do so? This is an offence.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. There is no offence meant, friends. I told you then, in the summer, "If you want to, all right!" You did not want to, and now I cannot.

THIRD PEASANT. Father, have mercy on us! How are we to live? The land is small: there is not enough room to drive out a cow, nay, a chick, let me say. (*Leoníd Fédorovich walks away and stops in the door.*)

SCENE XLI. The same, Anna Pávlovna, and Doctor, *descending the stairs. Followed by Vasíli Leonídych, in a happy and playful frame of mind, putting the money into his pocketbook.*

ANNA PÁVLOVNA (*tightly laced, wearing a hat*). So shall I take them?

DOCTOR. Take them if the symptoms are repeated. Above everything else, conduct yourself properly. How can you expect thick syrup to pass through a capillary tube, especially if you compress that tube? Impossible! Just so it is with the biliary ducts. This is all very simple.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Well, all right, all right.

DOCTOR. You say it is all right, and go on as of old. Madam, you can't do it, you can't. Well, good-bye!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Not good-bye, but *au revoir*. I shall be waiting for you in the evening, — without you I sha'n't risk it.



DOCTOR. Very well, very well. If I have time, I will call. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XLII. The same, *without* Doctor.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA (*seeing the peasants*). What is this? What is this? What kind of people are these? (*Peasants bow.*)

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. These are peasants from the Kursk estate: they have come to see Leoníd Fédorovich about the purchase of some land.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. I see that they are peasants. But who has admitted them?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Leoníd Fédorovich has ordered them to come. Leoníd Fédorovich has just been talking with them about the sale of the land.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. What sale? There is no need of selling it. Above everything else, how could you let the people from the street straight into the house? How could you let people in from the street? People that sleep God knows where must not be admitted to the house — (*Becoming ever more excited.*) The folds of their dresses are full of all kinds of microbes: of scarlet fever microbes, of smallpox microbes, of diphtheria microbes! They are from Kursk, from the Government of Kursk, where there is an epidemic of diphtheria! — Doctor, doctor! Bring back the doctor!

(*Leoníd Fédorovich goes away, closing the door. Grigóri exit for the doctor.*)

SCENE XLIII. The same, *without* Leoníd Fédorovich and Grigóri.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH (*smoking into the peasants' faces*). Never mind, mamma! If you want to, I will fumigate them so that all the microbes will give up their ghost. Ah, what?

*(Anna Pávlovna keeps strict silence, awaiting the return of the doctor.)*

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH *(to the peasants)*. Do you fatten pigs? That is profitable!

FIRST PEASANT. In rivalry, we now and then let loose on the pig business.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Like this — yoo, yooó. *(Grunts like a young pig.)*

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Vovó, Vovó! Stop!

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Is it correct? Ah, what?

FIRST PEASANT. In rivalry, there is similarity.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Vovó, stop, I tell you!

SECOND PEASANT. What is that for?

THIRD PEASANT. I told you we had better stay in our lodging —

SCENE XLIV. The same, Doctor, and Grigóri.

DOCTOR. What is it again? What?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. You tell me not to be agitated. How can I be calm? I have not seen my sister for two months; I beware of every suspicious visitor, — and suddenly these people come from Kursk, — straight from Kursk, where there is an epidemic of diphtheria, — and straight into my house!

DOCTOR. You refer to these good fellows?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Yes, straight from a locality where there is diphtheria!

DOCTOR. Of course, if they come from a diphtheria centre, it is careless, but there is no cause for agitation.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. But you yourself prescribe caution!

DOCTOR. Yes, yes, but there is no cause for being so agitated.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. But there will have to be a complete disinfection.

DOCTOR. No, not complete,—that is too expensive, something like three hundred roubles, and even more. But I will fix it cheaply and just as efficaciously. To a big bottle of water take—

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Boiled water?

DOCTOR. Makes no difference. Boiled water is better. To a bottle of water take a tablespoon of salicylic acid, and have them wash everything which they have touched, and the good fellows, of course, must be sent away. That is all. Then you need have no fear. Sprinkle two or three glasses of the same composition through the air by means of the atomizer, and you will see how good it will all be. It is quite harmless!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Where is Tánya? Call Tánya!

SCENE XLV. The same *and* Tánya.

TÁNYA. What do you wish?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Do you know the big bottle in the boudoir?

TÁNYA. From which they have been sprinkling on the laundress yesterday?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Yes, yes. What else could I mean? Take this bottle and wash out first the place where they are standing with soap and then with that—

TÁNYA. Yes, madam. I know how.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Then take the atomizer— Still, I will be back and will do it myself.

DOCTOR. Do as I tell you, and have no fear! Well, good-bye, until the evening. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XLVI. The same, *without* Doctor.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. And drive them out, so that their breath even shall not be here! Get out, get out! Go! What are you waiting for?

FIRST PEASANT. In rivalry, we, in our foolishness, as it preposes —

GRIGÓRI (*taking the peasants out*). Come now, come now!

SECOND PEASANT. Give me my kerchief!

THIRD PEASANT. O Lord! I told you that we ought to have gone in the meanwhile to our lodging. (*Grigóri pushes them out.*)

SCENE XLVII. Anna Pávlovna, Grigóri, Fédor Iványch, Tánya, Vasíli Leonídych, and Messenger.

MESSENGER (*having made several attempts at saying something.*) Will there be any answer?

ANNA PÁVLONA. Ah, this is from Bourdier? (*Excitedly.*) Not any, not any, and take it back! I told her I had not ordered any such costume, and I will not allow my daughter to wear it.

MESSENGER. I can't help it. I was sent.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Go, go, and take it back! I will call there myself.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH (*solemnly*). Mr. Ambassador from Bourdier, go!

MESSENGER. You might have said so long ago. I have been sitting here five hours.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Emissary of Bourdier, go!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Please, stop! (*Messenger exit.*)

SCENE XLVIII. The same, *without* Messenger.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Betsy! Where is she? I am eternally having to wait for her!

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH (*yells at the top of his voice*). Betsy! Petríshchev! Come quick! Quick! Quick! Ah, what?

SCENE XLIX. The same, Petríshchev, Betsy, and Márya Konstantínovna.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. I am eternally having to wait for you.

BETSY. On the contrary, it is I who have been waiting for you. (*Petríshchev bows with his head only and kisses Anna Pávlovna's hand.*)

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Good morning! (*To Betsy.*) You always answer back!

BETSY. If you are not in good humour, mother, I prefer not to drive out.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Are we going or not?

BETSY. Yes, let us go! What is to be done?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Have you seen the costume from Bourdier?

BETSY. I have, and I like it very much. I ordered the costume, and I will put it on, when it is paid for.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. I will not pay for it, and I will not permit you to put on an indecent costume.

BETSY. What has made it indecent all at once? At first it was proper, and now you are prudish —

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Not prudish, but you will have to get the whole waist made over, and then you may.

BETSY. Mamma, really, that can't be done!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Well, put on your wraps! (*They sit down. Grigóri puts on their overshoes.*)

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Márya Konstantínovna! Do you see what emptiness there is in the antechamber?

MÁRYA KONSTANTÍNOVNA. Why? (*Laughs in advance.*)

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. The fellow from Bourdier has gone. Ah, what? Is it good? (*Roars.*)

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Well, let us go! (*Goes out through the door and immediately comes back.*) Tánya!

TÁNYA. What do you wish?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Don't let Fifi catch cold while I am away! If it asks to be let out, be sure and put on the yellow capote. It is not very well.

TÁNYA. Yes, madam. (*Anna Pávlovna, Betsy, and Grigóri exeunt.*)

SCENE L. Petríshchev, Vasíli Leonídych, Tánya, and Fédor Iváných.

PETRÍSHCHEV. Well, did you get it?

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Let me tell you, I got it with difficulty. At first I approached my male parent, — he bellowed and kicked me out. Then I went to my maternal parent, — and I got it! Here it is! (*Slaps his pocket.*) When I undertake a thing, they don't get away from me, — it's a dead grip. Ah, what? They will bring my wolf-dogs to-day?

(*Petríshchev and Vasíli Leonídych put on their wraps and exeunt. Tánya follows them.*)

SCENE LI. Fédor Iváných (*alone*).

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Yes, nothing but unpleasantness. How can they live in such discord? I must say the younger generation is not exactly right. And the rule of the women? When lately Leoníd Fédorovich wanted to interfere and saw that she was in ecstasy, he slammed the door. He is a man of rare kindness! Yes, of rare kindness — What is that? Is Tánya bringing them in again?

SCENE LII. Fédor Iváných, Tánya, and the three peasants.

TÁNYA. Go, go, uncle, never mind!

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Why did you bring them in again?



TÁNYA. But, Fédor Iványch, we must do something for them. I will wash it all off later.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. I see, nothing will come of it.

FIRST PEASANT. How, honourable man, are we to introduce our affair into action? You, your Honour, intercede for us, and we will be able to represent gratitude in full from the Commune as a reward for the trouble.

THIRD PEASANT. Try, little falcon,— we can't get along without it. The land is small, and there is not room enough to let out a cow, nay, not even a chick, let me say. (*Bows.*)

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. I am sorry for you, friends, but I do not know how to do it. I understand it all very well,— but he has refused. How is it to be done now? And the lady does not consent, either. Hardly! Well, let me have the paper,— I will go and try. I will ask him. (*Exit.*)

SCENE LIII. Tánya and the three peasants (*sighing*).

TÁNYA. Uncles, tell me what the matter now is.

FIRST PEASANT. If only we could get the signature of the application of his hand!

TÁNYA. You want the master to sign the paper, yes?

FIRST PEASANT. We want him to apply his hand to the paper, and take the money,— and that would be the solution.

THIRD PEASANT. If he only wrote down: "As the peasants wish, let me say, so, let me say, I, too, wish." And that would be all: he would sign it, and — the end of it.

TÁNYA. Only to sign it? All you want is for the master to sign? (*In thought.*)

FIRST PEASANT. In rivalry, the whole affair depends on it: he signs, so to speak, and no more of it.

TÁNYA. Wait and let us hear what Fédor Iványch has to say. If he cannot persuade him, I will try a trick.

FIRST PEASANT. You will trick him ?

TÁNYA. I will try.

THIRD PEASANT. Oh, the girl wants to intercede for us ? You get our request granted, and, let me say, we will agree to take care of you at the Commune's charge. That's it.

FIRST PEASANT. If this affair will be introduced into action, in rivalry, we can pay you with gold.

SECOND PEASANT. Of course !

TÁNYA. I can't promise for sure. As the proverb says : a trial is no joke, and —

FIRST PEASANT. And a request is no misfortune. That is so in rivalry.

SCENE LIV. The same *and* Fédor Iványch.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. No, my friends, you will not succeed. He does not consent, and he will not. Take your paper ! Go, go !

FIRST PEASANT (*takes the paper to Tánya*). So, for example, we will be relaying on you.

TÁNYA. In a minute, in a minute. Go and wait in the street for me ! I will be there at once, and I will tell you something. (*Peasants exeunt.*)

SCENE LV. Fédor Iványch *and* Tánya.

TÁNYA. Fédor Iványch, my dear, please ask the master to come out for a minute. I have to tell him a word or two.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. What news is this ?

TÁNYA. It is important, Fédor Iványch. Ask him, Fédor Iványch ! There is nothing bad about it, upon my word !

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH (*smiling*). I can't understand what you are up to! Yes, I will tell him, I will. (*Exit.*)

SCENE LVI. Tánya (*alone*).

TÁNYA. Really, I will do it. He said himself that there is a power in Semén, and I know how to do it all. Nobody caught on then. Now I will teach Semén how to do it. And if it does not succeed, there will be no sin in doing it. There is no sin in doing it.

SCENE LVII. Tánya, Leoníd Fédorovich *followed by* Fédor Iványch.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH (*smiling*). So you have a request to make! What kind of an affair have you?

TÁNYA. A little secret, Leoníd Fédorovich. Permit me to tell it to you in private.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Indeed! Fédor, go out for a minute!

SCENE LVIII. Leoníd Fédorovich *and* Tánya.

TÁNYA. As I have been living in your house, Leoníd Fédorovich, and have grown up here, and as I am grateful to you for so much, I will tell you everything, as if you were my own father. Semén, who is living in your house, wants to marry me.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Indeed?

TÁNYA. I will tell you everything, as before God. I am an orphan, and I have no one to consult —

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Why not? He seems to be a nice fellow.

TÁNYA. Yes, he is. That would be all right, but I have fears about one thing. I should like to ask you about this matter: there is something about him which I

cannot understand, and I am afraid it might be something bad.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. What is it? He drinks?

TÁNYA. No, God forbid! But as I know that there is such a thing as spirituality —

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. You do?

TÁNYA. Of course I do! I understand it very well. Others, being ignorant, do not understand it —

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Well, what of it?

TÁNYA. I have my fears about Semén. Such things happen with him.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. What things?

TÁNYA. Something like spirituality. You ask the servants! The moment he falls asleep at the table the table begins to shake; it begins to creak like this: tick, ti-tick! All the people have heard it.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. That's precisely what I told Ser-gyéy Ivánovich this morning. Well?

TÁNYA. So — when was it? Oh, yes, on Wednesday. We sat down to dinner. No sooner did he sit down than the spoon came right into his hand, — it just jumped into his hand.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Ah, this is interesting! It just jumped into his hand? Well, did he fall asleep?

TÁNYA. I did not notice. I think he did.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Well?

TÁNYA. Well, I am afraid there might be some harm from it, and so I wanted to ask you about it. I did not know whether I could risk it to live with him, because he has such a thing.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH (*smiling*). No, don't be afraid: there is no harm from it. This only means that he is a medium, simply a medium. I knew before that he was a medium.

TÁNYA. That's all. I was so afraid!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. No, don't be afraid, it won't hurt.

(*Aside.*) That is nice. Kápchich can't be here to-day, so we will test him — No, my dear, don't be afraid, he will make you a good husband, and all that. This is a special power which is in everybody, — only weaker in some, and stronger in others.

TÁNYA. Very much obliged to you. I sha'n't give it any thought now. But before, I was afraid. This comes from our ignorance!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. No, no, don't be afraid! Fédor!

SCENE LIX. The same *and* Fédor Iványch.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. I am going away. Have everything ready for the séance this evening!

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. But Kápchich cannot be here.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. That does not matter. We will have it all the same. (*Puts on his overcoat.*) There will be a trial séance with our own medium. (*Exit. Fédor Iványch sees him off.*)

SCENE LX. Tánya (*alone*).

TÁNYA. He believed me, he believed me! (*Squeaks and leaps about.*) Upon my word, he believed me! What a wonder! (*Squeaks.*) I will do it now, if only Semén is not shy.

SCENE LXI. Tánya *and* Fédor Iványch (*returning*).

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Well, have you told him your secret?

TÁNYA. I have. I will tell it to you, too, only later. I have a request to make of you, Fédor Iványch.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. What request is it?

TÁNYA (*abashed*). You have been like a second father to me, and so I will tell you everything, as before God.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Don't beat around the bush, but talk business!

TÁNYA. Business? Well, the business is that Semén wants to marry me.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Indeed. I thought I noticed something.

TÁNYA. Why should I conceal it? I am an orphan, and you know yourself how it is here in the city: everybody annoys me with his attentions. Take, for example, Grigóri Mikhálych. He gives me no peace. They all think that I have no soul, that I am intended for a toy for them —

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. You are clever, — I like that! Well, what of it?

TÁNYA. Semén wrote to his father, and when his father saw me to-day, he said that his son was spoilt — Fédor Iványch! (*Bows.*) Be in place of my father, and speak with the old man, with Semén's father. I will take them to the kitchen, if you will come there and talk with the old man.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH (*smiling*). Oh, you mean to have me for a match-maker? I do not object.

TÁNYA. Dear Fédor Iványch, be in place of my father, and I will all my life pray to God for you.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. All right, all right, I will be there. I will do as I promise. (*Takes the newspaper.*)

TÁNYA. Be my second father!

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. All right, all right!

TÁNYA. Then I will hope. (*Exit.*)

SCENE LXII. Fédor Iványch (*alone. Shaking his head.*)

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. She is a good, kindly girl. When you think of it, how many of them get ruined! Let them make one false step, and down they go. Then you can't pick them out from the mire. Take, for example,



dear Natálya. She was a nice girl, and a mother had borne and brought her up — (*Takes his paper.*) Well, Ferdinand, how is she getting on?

*Curtain.*

## ACT II.

*The scene represents the interior of the servants' kitchen.*

*The peasants, having taken off their wraps, are seated at the table and, perspiring, are drinking tea. Fédor Iványch, with a cigar, at the other end of the stage. On the oven is the old cook, not visible during the first four scenes.*

### SCENE I. Three peasants and Fédor Iványch.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. My advice is for you not to interfere with him. If he wants it, and she wants it, may God help them! She is a good girl. Don't pay any attention to her being so dressed up! This is city style, — she can't help it! She is a clever girl.

SECOND PEASANT. Well, if he wants her, let him! It is not I who will live with her, but he. Only she looks too clean. How can we take her to the hut? She won't even let her mother-in-law pat her.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. My friend, it does not depend upon the cleanliness, but on the character. If she has a good character, she will be submissive and respectful.

SECOND PEASANT. I will take her if the lad has set his heart upon her. Of course, it is bad to live with one you do not love! I will take counsel with the old woman, and God aid them!

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Agreed?

SECOND PEASANT. I suppose so.

FIRST PEASANT. How it fortunes you, Zakhár: you have come for the accomplishment of business, and he-

hold, what a queen of a girl you have gotten for a wife for your son. Now you ought to set up the drinks, to do it according to property.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. That is entirely unnecessary. (*An awkward silence.*)

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. I understand your peasant life quite well. I must tell you, I am myself considering about some land somewhere. I should like to build me a little house, and take to farming. I would not mind out your way.

SECOND PEASANT. It is a very good thing!

FIRST PEASANT. In rivalry, with money you can receive all kinds of pleasures in the village.

THIRD PEASANT. I should say so! The life in the country, let me say, is in any case freer than in the city.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Well, will you take me into your Commune, if I should settle in your village?

SECOND PEASANT. Why not? You will treat the old men to liquor, and they will take you at once.

FIRST PEASANT. You will open a wine establishment, for example, or an inn, and you will live such a life that you won't have to die. You will lord it, and nothing more.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. We will see about that later. All I want is to live out my days in peace. I live comfortably here, and I should hate to leave the place: Leoníd Fédorovich is a man of rare kindness.

FIRST PEASANT. This is so in rivalry. But how is it about our affair? Will it really be without consequences?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. He would like to help you.

SECOND PEASANT. Evidently he is afraid of his wife.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. He is not afraid, but there is no agreement.

THIRD PEASANT. You ought to try for us, father, for how can we get along without it? The land is small —

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. We will see what will come of Tatyána's attempt. She has undertaken to help you.

THIRD PEASANT (*drinking tea*). Father, take pity on

us! The land is small, there is not enough room to drive out a cow, nay, not even a chick.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. The affair is not in my hands. (*To the Second Peasant.*) Well, well, friend, so we are the match-makers! Tánya's affair is settled, is it not?

SECOND PEASANT. I have told you, and I will not back out, even without the drinks. If only our affair came out right!

SCENE II. The same. *Enter Woman Cook. She looks into the stove, makes signs into that direction, and immediately begins to speak with animation to Fédor Iványch.*

COOK. They have just called Semén away from the family kitchen, and have taken him up-stairs; the master and the other fellow, the one that is bald and who makes them come, have put him down in a chair and have ordered him to act in Kápchich's place.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. What nonsense!

COOK. It is the truth! Yákov has just told Tánya about it.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. This is wonderful!

SCENE III. The same and Coachman.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. What do you want?

COACHMAN (*to Fédor Iványch*). Do tell them that I was not hired to live with dogs. Let anybody else live who wants to, but I am not willing.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. With what dogs?

COACHMAN. They brought three dogs from Vasíli Leonídych to the coachman's room. They have dirtied it, and they howl, and you can't get near them, for they bite. They are angry devils, and they will eat me up if I do not look out. I feel like breaking their legs with a stick.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. When was that done ?

COACHMAN. They brought them to-day from the exposition : they are expensive beasts : pout-bodied they call them, or some such name, — the devil take them ! Either the dogs or the coachmen stay in the coachman's room. You tell them so !

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Yes, that is improper. I will go and ask about it.

COACHMAN. They ought to be here. I suppose Lukérya would like to have them.

COOK (*excitedly*). People eat here, and you want to shut up dogs. As it is —

COACHMAN. But I have caftans, rugs, harness. And they demand that it be clean. Well, take them to the servants' room.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. I must tell Vasíli Leonídych about it.

COACHMAN (*angrily*). Let him hang the dogs around his neck, and walk around with them ! Anyway, he likes too much to ride around : he has spoilt Beauty for nothing. It was such a fine horse ! What a life ! (*Exit, slamming the door.*)

#### SCENE IV. The same *without* Coachman.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Yes, disorder, disorder ! (*To the peasants.*) Well, in the meantime, good-bye, good people !

PEASANTS. God be with you ! (*Fédor Iványch exit.*)

SCENE V. The same, *without* Fédor Iványch.  
(*The moment Fédor Iványch has left, groans are heard on the oven.*)

SECOND PEASANT. He is as smooth as a general.

COOK. What is the use of talking ? He has a separate room ; he gets his linen from the masters ; sugar, tea, — all from the masters, and the food is from the table.

OLD COOK. How can the devil help living when he has swiped a lot.

SECOND PEASANT. Who is the man there on the oven?

COOK. Oh, just a man. (*Silence.*)

FIRST PEASANT. Well, I saw you lately eating supper, and it was a mighty good capital.

COOK. We can't complain. She is not stingy on that. White bread on Sundays, fish on holiday fasts, and if you want to, you may eat meat.

SECOND PEASANT. Do they not keep the fasts?

COOK. Hardly one of them does. The only ones who keep the fasts are the coachman (not the one that was here, but an old fellow), and Semén, and I, and the house-keeper; the rest chew meat.

SECOND PEASANT. Well, and he himself?

COOK. What are you about? He has even forgotten what a fast means.

THIRD PEASANT. O Lord!

FIRST PEASANT. That is the gentlemen's way, — they have come to it from books, because it is intelligentness!

THIRD PEASANT. Bolted bread every day, I suppose?

COOK. Oh, bolted bread! They don't know what your bolted bread is! You ought to see their food! What do they not have?

FIRST PEASANT. The gentlemen's food, naturally, is airlike.

COOK. That's it, airlike, and they are great hands at chewing.

FIRST PEASANT. That means that they have appekites, so to speak.

COOK. And so they wash it down. All those sweet wines, brandy, frothing liquors, at every course a different one. They eat and wash it down, they eat and wash it down.



FIRST PEASANT. That, so to speak, carries the food into the preportion.

COOK. They are great hands at chewing, — it is just terrible! They don't know anything about sitting down, eating, crossing themselves, and getting up. No, they eat without stopping.

SECOND PEASANT. Like pigs, with their feet in the trough. (*Peasants laugh.*)

COOK. God bless them, the moment they open their eyes they immediately want their samovár, their tea, coffee, or chocolate. No sooner have they emptied two samovárs than they want a third. Then comes breakfast, then dinner, then again coffee. No sooner have they rested than they begin to drink tea again. And then all the dainties: confectionery, jams, — oh, there is no end to it. They eat even while lying in bed.

THIRD PEASANT. Well, I declare! (*Roars.*)

FIRST AND SECOND PEASANTS. What is the matter with you?

THIRD PEASANT. I should like to live just one day like that!

SECOND PEASANT. When do they attend to business?

COOK. What business? All the business they have is cards and the piano. The moment the young lady opens her eyes, she makes for the piano, and begins to bang. And the one that lives here, the teacher, stands and waits for the piano to get disengaged. The moment one drops off, the other one lets herself loose. Sometimes they put up two pianos, and two of them, and even four persons, bang away at it. They bang so that we can hear it here.

THIRD PEASANT. O Lord!

COOK. That's all the business they have: the piano and cards. The moment they come together, they begin playing cards, drinking wine, and smoking, — and so it goes all night. The moment they get up, they begin to eat!

SCENE VI. The same *and* Semén.

SEMÉN. Tea and sugar!

FIRST PEASANT. Do us the favour and sit down.

SEMÉN (*walking up to the table*). My humblest thanks!  
(*First Peasant pours out a glass of tea for him.*)

SECOND PEASANT. Where have you been?

SEMÉN. Up-stairs.

SECOND PEASANT. What were you doing there?

SEMÉN. I can't make it out. I don't know how to tell it.

SECOND PEASANT. What kind of a thing was it?

SEMÉN. I do not know how to tell it. They were testing some power in me. I can't make it out. Tatyána said to me: "Do it," says she, "and we will get him to sell the land to our peasants."

SECOND PEASANT. How is she going to do it?

SEMÉN. I can't make it out, for she does not tell. All she says is: "Do as I tell you!"

SECOND PEASANT. Do what?

SEMÉN. Really nothing at all. They put me in a chair, then they put out the lights, and told me to sleep. Tatyána was hid near by. They did not see her, but I did.

SECOND PEASANT. What was that for?

SEMÉN. God knows, — I can't make it out.

FIRST PEASANT. Of course, for pastime.

SECOND PEASANT. Evidently you and I can't understand it. Tell me: how much money have you spent?

SEMÉN. Not any. I have saved everything: twenty-eight roubles, I think.

SECOND PEASANT. That is good. If God grants us to get the land, Semén, I will take you home with me.

SEMÉN. That would please me.

SECOND PEASANT. You are spoilt, I am afraid. You won't like to do the ploughing.

SEMÉN. Ploughing? I would do it this minute. Mowing and ploughing is not so easily forgotten.

FIRST PEASANT. After the city life you will not, for example, have the patience.

SEMÉN. One can live well in the village, too.

FIRST PEASANT. Now here is Uncle Mítiri, and he is covetous of your delicate life.

SEMÉN. Uncle Mítiri, you would get tired of it. It looks easy, but there is a great deal of running about. One gets all mixed up.

COOK. Uncle Mítiri, you ought just to see their balls, — you would be surprised!

THIRD PEASANT. Why, do they eat all the time?

COOK. No! You ought to have seen it! Fédor Iványch took me to see it. When I looked, I got scared. Oh, how they were fitted out! You never saw the like! Naked down to here, and their arms bare.

THIRD PEASANT. O Lord!

SECOND PEASANT. Fie, what nastiness!

FIRST PEASANT. The climate, so to speak, permits it.

COOK. So, uncle, I looked at them, and I saw they were all of them naked. Would you believe it, the old ones — even our lady who has grandchildren — were bare, too.

SECOND PEASANT. O Lord!

COOK. What do you think? When the music struck up, and they began to play, the gentlemen came up and embraced the ladies and began to whirl around.

SECOND PEASANT. The old women, too?

COOK. The old women, too.

SEMÉN. No, the old women remain sitting.

COOK. What are you saying? I saw them myself.

SEMÉN. I tell you, no.

OLD COOK (*sticking his head out, in a hoarse voice*). This is the polka-mazurka. Oh, you fool, you don't know anything: that's the way they dance —

COOK. You, dancer, keep quiet! Somebody is coming.

SCENE VII. The same *and* Grigóri. (*The old cook hastens to hide himself.*)

GRIGÓRI (*to the cook*). Let me have sour cabbage!

COOK. I have just come back from the cellar, and I have to go there again. Who needs it?

GRIGÓRI. The young ladies want sour soup with croutons. Lively there! Send it up with Semén, for I have no time!

COOK. They stuff themselves with sweets, until they can't swallow any more, and then they want cabbage.

FIRST PEASANT. For cleaning out, so to speak.

COOK. Yes, they make room for more stuffing! (*Takes a bowl and exit.*)

SCENE VIII. The same *without* Cook.

GRIGÓRI (*to the peasants*). How comfortable you look here! Look out! The lady will find it out, and then she will give you an overhauling which will be worse than what it was in the morning. (*Laughs and exit.*)

SCENE IX. The peasants, Semén, *and* Old Cook (*on the oven*).

FIRST PEASANT. In rivalry, she did storm then, — it was just terrible!

SECOND PEASANT. At that time he wanted to take our part, but when he saw that she was tearing the roof down, he slammed the door, as much as to say: "All right, carry on as you please!"

THIRD PEASANT (*waving his hand*). There is not much difference. Many a time, let me say, my old woman flames up terribly. Then I leave the house. Let her carry on! At such times I am afraid that she might hit me with the oven-fork. O Lord!

SCENE X. The same *and* Yákov (*running in with a prescription*).

YÁKOV. Semén, run to the apothecary's, lively! Get these powders for the lady!

SEMÉN. But he told me not to leave.

YÁKOV. You will have plenty of time. Your business begins after tea. Tea and sugar!

FIRST PEASANT. You are welcome! (*Semén exit.*)

SCENE XI. The same, *without* Semén.

YÁKOV. I have no time! Fill up a cup for company's sake!

FIRST PEASANT. We have preposed a conversation how that your lady acted so proudly in the morning.

YÁKOV. Oh, she is dreadfully hot! She is so hot, she forgets herself. Sometimes she bursts out weeping.

FIRST PEASANT. Here is, for example, what I wanted to ask. In the morning she preposed something about microtes: "You have brought microtes, microtes with you," she said. What is this microte to be applied to?

YÁKOV. Oh, you mean the microves. They say they are a kind of bugs from which all diseases come. She meant to say that you had them on you. Oh, how they washed and sprinkled the place where you had been standing! There is a medicine from which they all die, — I mean the bugs.

SECOND PEASANT. Where are these bugs on us?

YÁKOV (*drinking tea*). They say they are so tiny, you can't see them even through glasses.

SECOND PEASANT. How does she know they are on me? Maybe there is more of that nastiness upon her.

YÁKOV. Go and ask them!

SECOND PEASANT. I suppose it is all nonsense.

YÁKOV. Of course, nonsense. But the doctors have

to invent something, else what would they get the money for? He comes to see us every day. He comes, says something, and gets ten roubles.

SECOND PEASANT. Is it possible?

YÁKOV. There is one of them who gets one hundred.

FIRST PEASANT. In rivalry, one hundred?

YÁKOV. One hundred! You say: one hundred? He takes a thousand, if he goes out of the city. "Give me a thousand," says he, "or you may give up the ghost!"

THIRD PEASANT. O Lord!

SECOND PEASANT. Does he know some charm?

YÁKOV. I suppose he does. I used to live at the house of a general, not far from Moscow. This general was such a high-tempered man, oh, so high-tempered! So once his daughter grew ill. They sent at once for this doctor. "A thousand roubles, and I will come." They agreed to it, and he came. In some way they did not please the doctor: well, you ought to have heard him yell out at the general! "Ah," says he, "so this is the way you treat me? Ah, I will not cure her!" Would you believe it? The general forgot his pride, and tried every way to quiet him down. "Sir, don't abandon me!"

FIRST PEASANT. Did they give him the thousand?

YÁKOV. I should say they did.

SECOND PEASANT. What a heap of money! What a peasant could do with it!

THIRD PEASANT. But I think it is all nonsense. At one time my leg was sore. I doctored it, and doctored it, — I spent about five roubles on doctoring. Then I gave up doctoring, and it healed up by itself. (*The Old Cook on the oven coughs.*)

YÁKOV. Our friend is there again!

FIRST PEASANT. Who is that man?

YÁKOV. He used to be our master's cook. He comes to see Lukérya.



FIRST PEASANT. Chef, so to speak. Does he live here?

YÁKOV. No. He is not allowed to stay here. He is in one place in the daytime, and in another in the night. If he has three kopeks, he stays in a night lodging-house; and if he has spent it on drinks, he comes here.

SECOND PEASANT. What is the matter with him?

YÁKOV. He is weak. What a man he used to be! A real gentleman. He used to wear a gold watch, and received as high as forty roubles a month in wages. And now he would have starved long ago, if Lukérya had not helped him out.

SCENE XII. The same *and* Cook (*with the cabbage*).

YÁKOV (*to Lukérya*). I see, Pável Petróvich is here again.

COOK. Where shall he go to? Shall he freeze to death?

THIRD PEASANT. See what liquor will do! The liquor, let me say — (*Clicks his tongue in compassion.*)

SECOND PEASANT. Of course: if a man wants to be firm, he is firmer than rock; if he weakens, he is weaker than water.

OLD COOK (*crawls down from the oven, trembling with his legs and arms*). Lukérya, I say, — let me have a wine-glass!

COOK. Where are you going? I will let you have such a wine-glass —

OLD COOK. For the love of God! I am dying. Friends, let me have five kopeks!

COOK. I tell you, climb back on the oven!

OLD COOK. Cook! Half a glass! For Christ's sake, I say, — you understand? I beg you, for Christ's sake.

COOK. Go, go! You may have some tea.

OLD COOK. What tea? What is tea? A stupid and

weak drink. Let me have liquor, only a swallow! Lukérya!

THIRD PEASANT. How the poor fellow is suffering!

SECOND PEASANT. Had you not better let him have some?

COOK (*goes to the safe and pours out a wine-glassful*). Here! That is all I will give you!

OLD COOK (*seizes it, and drinks it with trembling hands*). Lukérya! Cook! I drink, but you must understand —

COOK. That will do! Climb on the oven, and let me not hear a word from you!

(*The Old Cook submissively climbs on the oven, and continues to grumble something to himself.*)

SECOND PEASANT. Just see what it means for a man to weaken!

FIRST PEASANT. In rivalry, what is human weakness?

THIRD PEASANT. What is the use of mentioning it? (*The Old Cook lies down, continuing to grumble. Silence.*)

SECOND PEASANT. I wanted to ask you: there is a girl from our village, Aksínya's daughter, living here; well, — how is she? Is she a good girl, so to speak?

YÁKOV. Yes, she is, — I may honestly say so.

COOK. Let me tell you truthfully, uncle, for I know the conditions here pretty well, — if you want to marry your son to her, take her away at once, before she has a chance to get spoilt, — or else it is bound to happen.

YÁKOV. That is so. For example, last year there was a girl, Natályá by name, living in our house. She was a nice girl. She was completely ruined, just like this fellow. (*Points to the Old Cook.*)

COOK. A whole lot of us women go to ruin here. They all hanker for light work and sweet food. Behold, before they know it, the sweet food leads them astray, and when they are led astray, nobody wants them. They are at once sent away, and fresh ones take their place. Just so it happened with poor Natályá: she

went wrong, and so she was immediately sent away. She had a child, then grew ill, and last spring she died in the hospital. What a fine girl she was!

THIRD PEASANT. O Lord! They are weak creatures, and ought to be pitied.

OLD COOK. Yes, you wait for the devils to pity them! (*Dangles his legs over the oven.*) I had been roasting at the stove for thirty years. When I became useless to them, they left me to die like a dog. Yes, they will pity a soul!

FIRST PEASANT. This, in rivalry, is a well-known situation.

SECOND PEASANT. While eating and drinking they call you curly-head; through eating and drinking, good-bye, scald-head!

THIRD PEASANT. O Lord!

OLD COOK. You don't know much. What means *sauté à la Beaumont*? What means *bavasari*? That's what I was able to do! Think of it! The emperor used to eat my dishes. And now I am of no use to the devils. But I will not submit!

COOK. Don't talk so much! Look out! Crawl back into your corner so that you can't be seen, or else Fédor Iványch will come in, or somebody else, and then they will drive me away with you.

(*Silence.*)

YÁKOV. Do you know my village, Voznesénskoe

SECOND PEASANT. Certainly I do. It is about seventeen versts, not more than that, from us, and by cross-roads it is even less. Do you have any land there?

YÁKOV. My brother has, and I send him money. Although I am staying here, I am dying to be at home.

FIRST PEASANT. In rivalry!

SECOND PEASANT. Anísim, then, is your brother?

YÁKOV. Yes, he! At the farther end.

SECOND PEASANT. I know, the third farm.

SCENE XIII. The same *and Tányá (running in).*

TÁNYA. Yákov Iványch! Don't take it easy here! She is calling!

YÁKOV. I am coming. What is up?

TÁNYA. Fifi is barking and wants to eat. She is scolding you. "What a bad man he is," she says. "He has no pity at all," says she. "It wants to eat, and he does not bring anything!" (*Laughs.*)

YÁKOV (*about to go*). Oh, she is angry? I hope there won't be anything bad!

COOK (*to Yákov*). Take the cabbage along!

YÁKOV. Let me have it! (*Takes the cabbage, and exit.*)

SCENE XIV. The same, *without Yákov.*

FIRST PEASANT. Who is going to dine now?

TÁNYA. The dog. That is her dog. (*Sits down and takes hold of the teapot.*) Have you any tea? I have brought some more. (*Pours it in.*)

SECOND PEASANT. Dinner for a dog?

TÁNYA. Why, of course! They prepare a special cutlet for the dog, one that is not too fat. I wash the dog's linen.

THIRD PEASANT. O Lord!

TÁNYA. Like that gentleman who buried his dog.

SECOND PEASANT. What about him?

TÁNYA. A man was telling that a gentleman's dog had died. It was in winter, and he drove out to bury him. He buried him, and he drove back again, and kept weeping. It was a biting frost, and the coachman's nose was running all the time, and he wiped it off — Let me fill you the glass. (*Fills the glass.*) His nose ran,

and he kept wiping it. His master saw it, and says he: "What is it? What makes you weep?" And the coachman said: "How can I help weeping when I think of the dog?" (*Laughs.*)

SECOND PEASANT. And, I suppose, he was all the time thinking: "I would not weep even if you gave up the ghost." (*Laughs.*)

OLD COOK (*on the oven*). That is correct! That is so!

TÁNYA. Very well. The master came home, and says he to the lady: "What a kind man our coachman is! He has been crying all the way home: he is so sorry for my dog. Call him in! Here, take some brandy! And here is a rouble as a reward!" And just so she carries on, because Yákov does not take care of her dog.

(*Peasants roar.*)

FIRST PEASANT. As is properly!

SECOND PEASANT. Well, I declare!

THIRD PEASANT. O girl, you have given us some fun!

TÁNYA (*pouring out more tea*). Drink some more! And so, although you may think we are having a good time, it makes me sick to clean up all their nastiness. Pshaw! It is better in the village.

(*The peasants turn their cups upside down.*)

TÁNYA (*filling them*). Drink, and may it give you health! Efím Antónych! Let me pour you out another glass, Mítri Vláševich!

THIRD PEASANT. Well, fill it, fill it!

FIRST PEASANT. Well, how does our affair originate, clever girl?

TÁNYA. All right, it is progressing —

FIRST PEASANT. Semén said —

TÁNYA (*rapidly*). He said ?

SECOND PEASANT. But I can't make him out.

TÁNYA. I can't tell you now, but I will try, I will. Here is your document ! (*Points to the document under her apron.*) If just one thing goes right ! (*Squeaks.*) Oh, how good it would be !

SECOND PEASANT. Look out and don't lose the paper. It has cost us a little something.

TÁNYA. Have no fear ! All you want is for him to sign it ?

THIRD PEASANT. What else ? If he has signed it, let me say, that is the end of it ! (*Turns his cup upside down.*) That will do.

TÁNYA (*aside*). He will sign it. You will see, he will. Drink some more ! (*Fills the glass.*)

FIRST PEASANT. You just fix the accomplishment of the sale of the land, and we will get you married at the Commune's expense. (*Refuses the tea.*)

TÁNYA (*filling a glass and handing it*). Drink !

THIRD PEASANT. Do it, and we will get you married, and, let me say, we will dance at your wedding. Although I have never danced in all my life, I will then.

TÁNYA (*laughing*). I shall expect that. (*Silence.*)

SECOND PEASANT (*examining Tánja*). All right, but you are not good for peasant work.

TÁNYA. Who, I ? You think I am not strong enough ? You ought to see me pull in the lady. Many a peasant could not pull her in that way.

SECOND PEASANT. Where do you pull her in ?

TÁNYA. It is made of bone, like a jacket, as high as this. It is laced with cords, and you have to pull it in, just as people spit in their hands and hitch up.

SECOND PEASANT. That is, you pull in the girth ?

TÁNYA. Yes, yes, I pull in the girth. But I dare not put my foot on her. (*Laughing.*)



SECOND PEASANT. Why do you pull her in?

TÁNYA. Because.

SECOND PEASANT. Has she made such a vow?

TÁNYA. No, for beauty's sake.

FIRST PEASANT. That is, you lace her belly for form's sake.

TÁNYA. I pull her in so that her eyes all bulge out, but she says: "More!" It makes both my hands smart, and you say I have no strength. (*The peasants laugh and shake their heads.*)

TÁNYA. I have chatted too long. (*Runs away, laughing.*)

THIRD PEASANT. How the girl has amused us!

FIRST PEASANT. How accurate she is!

SECOND PEASANT. She is all right.

SCENE XV. Three peasants, Cook, Old Cook (*on the oven*). Enter Sakhátov and Vasíli Leonídych. Sakhátov has a teaspoon in his hand.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Not exactly a dinner, but a *déjeuner dinatoire*. It was a fine breakfast, let me tell you! The ham was glorious! Roulier feeds you nicely. I have just come back. (*Seeing the peasants.*) The peasants are again here?

SAKHÁTOV. Yes, yes, that is all very beautiful, but we have come to conceal an object. So, where had we better put it?

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Pardon me, I will at once — (*To the Cook.*) Where are the dogs?

COOK. The dogs are in the coachman's room. How could we keep them in the servants' room?

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Ah, in the coachman's room? Very well.

SAKHÁTOV. I am waiting.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Pardon, pardon. Ah, what? Con-





ceal it? Yes, Sergyéy Ivánovich, so let me tell you: let us put it into the pocket of one of these peasants. Into this fellow's pocket. Say! Ah, what? Where is your pocket?

THIRD PEASANT. What do you want with my pocket? I declare, my pocket! I have money in my pocket.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Well, and where is your purse?

THIRD PEASANT. What do you want with it?

COOK. What are you doing? This is the young master.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH (*laughing*). Do you know why he is so frightened? I will tell you why: he has a lot of money. Ah, what?

SAKHÁTOV. Yes, yes, I understand. You talk with them, and in the meantime I will put it into this wallet, so that they shall not know anything and shall not be able to tell him. You talk with them.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. At once, at once. Well, boys, are you going to buy the land? Ah, what?

FIRST PEASANT. We have preposed so with all our hearts. But somehow the affair does not originate into motion.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Don't be stingy! The land is an important matter. I told you to sow mint. You might plant tobacco, too.

FIRST PEASANT. This is so, in rivalry. We can sow all kinds of produces.

THIRD PEASANT. Good sir, can't you ask your father for us? Else how are we to live? Our land is small: there is not enough room, let me say, to drive out a cow, nay, not even a chick.

SAKHÁTOV (*having placed the spoon in the wallet of the Third Peasant*). *C'est fait*. Ready. Let us go! (*Exit.*)

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Don't be stingy, ah? Well, good-bye! (*Exit.*)

SCENE XVI. Three peasants, Cook, and Old Cook (*on the oven*).

THIRD PEASANT. I told you, we ought to have gone to the lodging. We should have paid a dime each, and would have had our peace; but God save us from what they are doing here. "Give me the money," says he. "What is this for?"

SECOND PEASANT. He must have drunk a little too much. (*The peasants turn over their cups, get up, and cross themselves.*)

FIRST PEASANT. Don't forget the words he has cast about sowing mint! You must understand this!

SECOND PEASANT. Yes, sow mint! You try and bend your back, and you won't ask for any mint, I am sure! Thank you! Well, clever woman, where shall we lie down?

COOK. One of you can lie down on the oven, and the other two on the benches.

THIRD PEASANT. Christ save us! (*Prays.*)

FIRST PEASANT. If God should give us the accomplishment of the affair (*lying down*), we could slide down on the train to-morrow, and on Tuesday we should be at home.

SECOND PEASANT. Will you put out the light?

COOK. Indeed not! They will be running in all the time: now for one thing, now for another. Lie down, and I will turn down the light.

SECOND PEASANT. How can one live on a small plot? I have been buying grain ever since Christmas. The oat straw is giving out, too. If I could, I should get four desyatinas, and would take Semén home.

FIRST PEASANT. You have a family. You will have no trouble looking after the land, if you get it. If only the affair were accomplished.

THIRD PEASANT. We must ask the Queen of Heaven. Maybe She will take pity on us.

SCENE XVII. *Silence. Sighs. Then are heard the thud of footsteps, the din of voices, and the door is opened wide, and there rush in headlong: Grossmann with tied up eyes, holding Sakhátov's hand, the Professor and Doctor, Stout Lady and Leoníd Fédorovich, Betsy and Petrishchev, Vasíli Leonídych and Márya Konstantínovna, Anna Pávlovna and Baroness, Fédor Iványch and Tánya. Three peasants, Cook, and Old Cook (invisible). (Peasants jump up. Grossmann enters with rapid steps, then stops.)*

STOUT LADY. Don't worry! I have undertaken to watch it, and I strictly fulfil my duty. Sergyéy Ivánovich, you are not leading him?

SAKHÁTOV. No.

STOUT LADY. Don't lead him, but, on the other hand, don't oppose yourself! (*To Leoníd Fédorovich.*) I know these experiments, I used to make them myself. I would feel the efflux, and the moment I felt —

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Permit me to ask you to observe silence.

STOUT LADY. Ah, I understand that well! I have experienced it myself. The moment my attention was distracted, I could not —

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Hush —

(*They walk around, searching near First and Second Peasant, and then walk over to Third Peasant. Grossmann runs up against a bench.*)

BARONESS. *Mais dites-moi, on le paye?*

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. *Je ne saurais vous dire.*

BARONESS. *Mais c'est un monsieur?*

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. *Oh! oui.*

BARONESS. *Ça tient du miraculeux. N'est-ce pas? Comment est-ce qu'il trouve?*

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. *Je ne saurais vous dire. Mon mari vous l'expliquera. (Seeing the peasants, looks around*



and sees the Cook.) Pardon? What is this? (*Baroness walks over to the group.*)

ANNA PÁVLOVNA (*to Cook*). Who let in the peasants?

COOK. Yákov brought them here.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Who told Yákov to bring them?

COOK. I can't tell you. Fédor Iványch has seen them.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Leoníd!

(*Leoníd Fédorovich does not hear, being busy with mind-reading, and says: "Hush!"*)

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Fédor Iványch! What does this mean? Did you not see me disinfect the antechamber? And now you have infected the whole kitchen! Black bread, kvas, —

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. I thought that it was not dangerous in here, and the men have come on business. It is far for them to go elsewhere, and they are away from their village.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. That is the trouble: they are from a Kursk village, where they are dying from diphtheria like flies. The main thing is I ordered them away from the house! Did I order so or not? (*Walks over to the group gathered about the peasants.*) Be careful! Don't touch them! They are infected with diphtheria!

(*Nobody pays any attention to her. She walks away with dignity, and stands motionless, in expectation.*)

PETRÍSHCHEV (*snuffles aloud*). I don't know about diphtheria, but there is some other infection in the air. Do you smell it?

BETSY. Stop your nonsense! Vovó, in which wallet is it?

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. In that one, in that. He is going up to it, he is going up!

PETRÍSHCHEV. What is this? Spirits or spirit?

BETSY. Now your cigarettes would be in place. Smoke,

smoke, and nearer to me! (*Petrishchev bends down and smokes over her.*)

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. He is getting near it, I tell you. Ah, what?

GROSSMANN (*restlessly groping around the Third Peasant*). Here, here. I feel that it is here.

STOUT LADY. Do you feel an efflux? (*Grossmann bends down to the wallet and takes the spoon out of it.*)

ALL. Bravo! (*Universal ecstasy.*)

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. So this is where our spoon was? (*To the Peasant.*) So that's what you did?

THIRD PEASANT. What did I do? I did not take your spoon. Don't accuse me! I did not take it, I did not, and my soul knows nothing about it. Let him say what he please! I knew, when he came, that it would not lead to anything good. "Give me your purse," he said. I did not take it, so help me Christ, I did not! (*The young people surround him and laugh.*)

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH (*angrily to his son*). Eternally your foolishness! (*To Third Peasant.*) Don't worry, my friend! We know that you did not take it. It was only a trial.

GROSSMANN (*takes off his bandage and pretends to be waking up*). A little water, if you please. (*Everybody is busy about him.*)

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Let us go from here to the coachman's room. I will show you a bitch I have there! *Épâtant!* Ah, what!

BETSY. What a nasty word! Can't you say "dog"?

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Impossible. One could not say about you: What an *épâtant* man Betsy is? One has to say "girl," just so in this case. Ah, what? Márya Konstantínovna, is it so? Was it good? (*Laughs.*)

MÁRYA KONSTANTÍNOVNA. Well, let us go!

(*Márya Konstantínovna, Betsy, Petrishchev, and Vasíli Leonídych exeunt.*)

SCENE XVIII. The same, *without* Betsy, Márya Konstantínovna, Petríshchev, and Vasíli Leonídych.

STOUT LADY (*to Grossmann*). What? How? Are you rested? (*Grossmann does not answer. To Sakhátov.*) Sergyéy Iványch, did you feel the efflux?

SAKHÁTOV. I did not feel anything. But it was nice, very nice, — quite a success.

BARONESS. *Admirable! Ça ne le fait pas souffrir?*

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. *Pas le moins du monde.*

PROFESSOR (*to Grossmann*). Permit me to ask you. (*Giving him the thermometer.*) At the beginning of the test it was thirty-seven and two. (*To the doctor.*) That is correct, I think? Be so kind as to verify the pulse. A loss is unavoidable.

DOCTOR (*to Grossmann*). Well, sir, let me take your pulse. We will verify it, we will. (*Takes out his watch and holds his hand.*)

STOUT LADY (*to Grossmann*). Excuse me! The condition in which you were cannot be called sleep?

GROSSMANN (*tired*). It is the same hypnosis.

SAKHÁTOV. Then we must understand it in the sense of your having hypnotized yourself?

GROSSMANN. Why not? Hypnosis can take place not only through association, as, for example, at the sound of a tam-tam, as with Charcot, but by a mere entrance into a hypnogenic zone.

SAKHÁTOV. I shall admit that that is correct, but it is desirable more clearly to define what hypnosis is.

PROFESSOR. Hypnosis is the phenomenon of the transmutation of one energy into another.

GROSSMANN. Charcot did not define it thus.

SAKHÁTOV. Excuse me, excuse me. Such is your definition, but Libot told me himself —

DOCTOR (*giving up the pulse*). Ah, it is all right, all right. Now the temperature.

STOUT LADY (*interposing*). No, excuse me! I agree with Alekseyé Vladímirovich. Here you have the best proof of all. When, after my illness, I lay senseless, I was overcome by a desire to talk. I am in general reserved, but suddenly the desire to talk developed in me, and they tell me I talked so that they all wondered. (*To Sakhátov.*) However, I think I interrupted you.

SAKHÁTOV (*with dignity*). Not in the least. Proceed!

DOCTOR. The pulse is eighty-two, the temperature has risen by three-tenths.

PROFESSOR. So here you have the proof. That is what it ought to be. (*Takes out a note-book and makes a memorandum.*) Eighty-two, am I right? And thirty-seven and five? As soon as hypnosis is caused, there is at once an intensified action of the heart.

DOCTOR. I can testify, as a doctor, that your prediction has fully been realized.

PROFESSOR (*to Sakhátov*). And you said?—

SAKHÁTOV. I wanted to say that Libot himself told me that hypnosis is only a special psychic condition which increases suggestion.

PROFESSOR. However, Libot is not an authority, while Charcot has made an all-around investigation of the subject and has proved that hypnosis produced by a blow, trauma—

SAKHÁTOV. I do not deny Charcot's labours. I know him, too. All I say is that Libot told me so.

GROSSMANN (*hotly*). In the Salpêtrière there are three thousand patients, and I have taken a full course.

PROFESSOR. Excuse me, gentlemen, that is not the point.

STOUT LADY (*interposing*). I will explain it to you in two words. When my husband was ill, all the doctors refused—

All together.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Let us go back to the house. Baroness, if you please.

*(Exeunt all speaking together and interrupting each other.)*

SCENE XIX. Three peasants, Cook, Fédor Iványch, Tánya, Old Cook *(on the oven)*, Leoníd Fédorovich, and Anna Pávlovna.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA *(pulling Leoníd Fédorovich's sleeve and stopping him)*. How many times have I told you not to give orders in the house! You know only your foolishness, and the house is on my shoulders. You will infect everybody.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Who? What? I do not understand a word.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. You ask? People sick with diphtheria sleep in the kitchen, where there is a constant intercourse with the house!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. I —

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. What I?

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. I do not know anything.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. You ought to know, since you are the father of a family. You ought not to do this.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. I did not think — I thought —

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. It makes me sick to listen to you!

*(Leoníd Fédorovich remains silent.)*

ANNA PÁVLOVNA *(to Fédor Iványch)*. Out with them this very minute! Let them not be in my kitchen! This is terrible. Nobody obeys me! Everything against me — I drive them away from one place, and they let them in here. *(Becomes ever more agitated until tears appear.)* Everything to spite me! Everything to spite

me! And with my ailing — Doctor, doctor! Peter Petróvich! He has gone!

*(Sobs and exit, followed by Leoníd Fédorovich.)*

SCENE XX. Three peasants, Tánya, Fédor Iványch, Cook, and Old Cook *(on oven)*.

*(Tableau. All stand for a long while in silence.)*

THIRD PEASANT. God be merciful with them! Before you know it a man will here be hauled up by the police. I have not been in court in all my life. Let us go to a lodging, boys!

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH *(to Tánya)*. What is to be done?

TÁNYA. Nothing, Fédor Iványch. Let them go to the coachman's room.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. How can they go to the coachman's room? The coachman has been complaining, as it is, that there are too many dogs there.

TÁNYA. Well, then, to the male servants' room.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. But if they should find out?

TÁNYA. They will not find out. Have no fear, Fédor Iványch. How can we drive them away at night? They would not even find a place.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Well, do as you think best, so they are away from here. *(Exit.)*

SCENE XXI. Three Peasants, Tánya, Cook, and Old Cook. *(Peasants pick up their wallets.)*

OLD COOK. I declare, they are accursed devils! They are having too good a time! The devils!

COOK. You shut up! Thank the Lord they did not see you!

TÁNYA. Come, my uncles, to the servants' room!

FIRST PEASANT. Well, how is our affair? How, for



example, is it in regard to the signature, the application of the hand? Well, are we to be in hope?

TÁNYA. You will find out in an hour.

SECOND PEASANT. Shall you be sly enough?

TÁNYA (*laughing*). If God is willing.

(*Curtain.*)

## ACT III.

*Action takes place, the same evening, in a small drawing-room, where all the tests of Leoníd Fédorovich are made.*

### SCENE I. Leoníd Fédorovich and Professor.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Well, shall we risk a séance with our new medium?

PROFESSOR. By all means. The medium is unquestionably a powerful one. Besides, it is desirable that the mediumistic séance should be this evening and with the same composition of the audience. Grossmann will, no doubt, have an effect on the mediumistic energy, and then the connection and oneness of the phenomena will be much more manifest. You will see that if the medium will be as strong as before, Grossmann will vibrate.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. In that case, you know, I will send for Semén, and will invite volunteers.

PROFESSOR. Yes, yes. In the meantime I want to make a few notes. (*Takes out a note-book and writes.*)

### SCENE II. The same and Sakhátov.

SAKHÁTOV. They have just sat down to cards in Anna Pávlovna's apartments. Being an odd number, and, besides, having an interest in the séance, I have made my appearance here. Well, will there be a séance?

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. There will be, by all means.

SAKHÁTOV. What, without Mr. Kápchich's mediumistic power?

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. *Vous avez la main heureuse.* Just imagine, the peasant of whom I told you turns out to be a real medium.

SAKHÁTOV. I declare! Oh, but that is particularly interesting!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Yes, yes. After dinner we made a little preliminary test with him.

SAKHÁTOV. You have had time to have it and to convince yourself?

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Completely so. He has proved to be a medium of wonderful power.

SAKHÁTOV (*incredulously*). I declare!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. It now turns out that this had been known quite awhile in the servants' room. When he sits down to a cup, the spoon jumps into his hand. (*To the Professor.*) Have you heard this?

PROFESSOR. No, I have not heard this particular thing.

SAKHÁTOV (*to the Professor*). Still, you admit the possibility of such phenomena?

PROFESSOR. Of what phenomena?

SAKHÁTOV. Well, in general, the spiritualistic, the mediumistic, in general, the supernatural phenomena.

PROFESSOR. The question is what do we call supernatural? When not a living man, but a piece of stone, attracted a nail, how did such a phenomenon seem to the spectators, natural or supernatural?

SAKHÁTOV. Yes, of course. Only, such phenomena, as the attraction of the magnet, are continually repeated.

PROFESSOR. The same thing happens here. The phenomenon is repeated, and we subject it to investigation. More than that, we subject the phenomena under investigation to the laws which are common to other phenomena. Phenomena seem to be supernatural only because the causes of the phenomena are ascribed to the

medium himself. But this is incorrect. The phenomena are produced, not by the medium, but by a spiritual energy working in the medium, and that is a great difference. The whole matter lies in the law of equivalency.

SAKHÁTOV. Yes, of course, but —

SCENE III. The same *and* Tánya (*who enters and stands behind the portière*).

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. You must remember this much: as with Hume and Kápchich, so even now you can't count on anything for certain with this medium. There may be a failure, and there may be a complete materialization.

SAKHÁTOV. Even materialization? What kind of a materialization can it be?

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. For example, a dead person may come: your father or grandfather will take your hand and will give you something; or somebody will rise in the air, as was last time the case with Aleksyéy Vladímirovich.

PROFESSOR. Of course, of course. But the main thing is to explain all these phenomena and to bring them under common laws.

SCENE IV. The same *and* Stout Lady.

STOUT LADY. Anna Pávlovna permitted me to come to see you.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. You are welcome!

STOUT LADY. How tired out this Grossmann is! He could not hold a cup. Did you notice how pale he grew (*to the Professor*) as he came near it? I noticed it at once, and I was the first to mention it to Anna Pávlovna.

PROFESSOR. No doubt. There was a loss of vital energy.

STOUT LADY. That's what I say, — we ought not to misuse it. A hypnotizer had suggested to a friend of mine, Vyérochka Konshín, — you know her, — to stop smoking, and her spine began to ache.

PROFESSOR (*wants to begin speaking*). The measurement of the temperature and of the pulse show obviously —

STOUT LADY. Just a minute, excuse me. So I told her it would be better to smoke than to suffer from the nerves. Of course, smoking is harmful, and I should like to give it up, but do what you please, I can't. I once stopped for two weeks, but I could not stand it any longer.

PROFESSOR (*again makes an attempt to speak*). Show conclusively —

STOUT LADY. No, just let me finish. I have only two words more to say. You say it is a loss of strength? I wanted to tell you that when I travelled post — The roads were dreadful then, — you can't remember that, but I have noticed that all our nervousness comes from the railroads. For example, I can't sleep on the road, — kill me, but I can't fall asleep.

PROFESSOR (*begins again, but the Stout Lady gives him no chance to speak*). The loss of strength —

SAKHÁTOV (*smiling*). Yes, yes.

(*Leoníd Fédorovich rings the bell.*)

STOUT LADY. Though I have been without sleep, one, two, three nights, I cannot fall asleep.

SCENE V. The same and Grigóri.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Please, tell Fédor to prepare everything for the séance and call Semén here, — Semén, the peasant of the pantry, — do you hear?

GRIGÓRI. Yes, sir! (*Exit.*)

SCENE VI. Leoníd Fédorovich, Professor, Stout Lady, and Tánya (*concealed*).

PROFESSOR (*to Sakhátov*). The measurement of the temperature and pulse show a loss of vital energy. The same will happen at mediumistic phenomena. The law of the preservation of energy —

STOUT LADY. Yes, yes. I wanted to say that I am very glad to see that a common peasant has turned out to be a medium. That is nice. I always said that the Slavophiles —

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Let us meanwhile go to the drawing-room!

STOUT LADY. Permit me to say just two words. The Slavophiles are right, but I always tell my husband that there is no reason for exaggerating. The golden means, you know — How can one affirm that everything is good with the masses, when I myself saw —

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Won't you, please, go to the drawing-room?

STOUT LADY. A boy not bigger than this, and he drinks. I scolded him. He was grateful to me for it later on. They are children, and children, so I always said, need love and severity — (*All exeunt, talking.*)

SCENE VII. Tánya (*alone, coming out from behind the door*).

TÁNYA. Oh, if I only may succeed! (*Ties twine.*)

SCENE VIII. Tánya and Betsy (*walks in hurriedly*).

BETSY. Is papa not here? (*Looking at Tánya.*) What are you doing here?

TÁNYA. Oh, Lizavéta Leonídvna, I just came in — I wanted — I just came in — (*Confused.*)



BETSY. Isn't there going to be a séance here at once? (*Noticing that Tánya is gathering up the twine, looks fixedly at her, and bursts out laughing.*) Tánya! You have been doing it all! Don't deny it! And you did it last time! Yes, you did, you did!

TÁNYA. Dear Lizavéta Leonídovna!

BETSY (*in ecstasy*). Ah, how good that is! I did not expect that! Why did you do it all?

TÁNYA. My dear Lizavéta Leonídovna, don't give me away!

BETSY. No, not for anything in the world. I am so glad! How do you do it?

TÁNYA. Like this: I will hide myself, and then, when they put out the lights, I will crawl out and do it.

BETSY (*pointing to the twine*). What is this for? Yes, I understand, you don't have to tell me: you catch them —

TÁNYA. Dear Lizavéta Leonídovna, I will tell you everything. Before this I only joked, but now I want to get something done.

BETSY. How? What? Something done?

TÁNYA. You have seen the peasants that have come to buy some land. Now, your papa will not sell it to them, and he has returned the document to them without signing it. Fédor Iványch says he did so because the spirits have told him to. So I am trying it this way.

BETSY. Ah, what a clever girl you are! Do it, do it! How are you going to do it?

TÁNYA. Like this: the moment they put out the lights, I will begin to rap, to throw the twine on their heads, and finally to hurl the paper on the floor, and on the table, — I have it with me.

BETSY. Well, and — ?

TÁNYA. Well, they will be astonished. The paper was in the hands of the peasants, and suddenly it is here. I will order —

BETSY. Oh, yes, Semén is the medium to-day!

TÁNYA. I will order him (*Can't speak for laughter.*) — will order him to choke anybody that gets into his hands, — only not your papa, — that he will not dare to do, — and to choke them until the paper is signed.

BETSY (*laughing*). But that is not the way it is done. A medium does not do anything himself.

TÁNYA. Oh, that won't hurt, — maybe it will be all right.

SCENE IX. *Tánya and Fédor Iványch. (Betsy makes a sign to Tánya and exit.)*

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH (*to Tánya*). What are you doing here?

TÁNYA. My dear Fédor Iványch, I have come to see you —

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. What is it?

TÁNYA. About what I have been asking you.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH (*laughing*). I have made the match, I have. We have shaken hands, but we have not drunk anything.

TÁNYA (*squeaking*). Is it really so?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. I tell you it is. He said he would take counsel with the old woman, and God aid you!

TÁNYA. He did say that? (*Squeaking.*) Ah, my dear Fédor Iványch, I will pray all my life for you!

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. All right, all right! I am busy now. I was told to fix things for the séance.

TÁNYA. Let me help you! How do you want to fix it?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. How? Like this: the table in the middle of the room, chairs, the guitar, the accordion. No lamps, — just candles.

TÁNYA (*arranges things with Fédor Iványch*). Is this right? The guitar here, the inkstand here — (*Placing things.*) Like this?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Will they really put Semén down?

TÁNYA. I suppose so. They have had him in the chair once.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Wonderful! (*Putting on his eye-glasses.*) But is he clean?

TÁNYA. How do I know?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. So you had better —

TÁNYA. What, Fédor Iványch?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Go, take a nail-brush and scented soap, — take mine, if you want to, — and cut his nails and wash them clean.

TÁNYA. He will wash them himself.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Well, tell him to do so. And let him put on clean linen.

TÁNYA. All right, Fédor Iványch. (*Exit.*)

SCENE X. Fédor Iványch (*alone, sitting down in an armchair*).

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. He is learned, yes, Aleksyéy Vladímirovich is a professor, but I often have my doubts about him. Popular superstitions are coarse, and they are destroyed: the superstitions about house-spirits, wizards, witches — And when you come to think of it, this is just such a superstition. Really, is it possible for the spirits of the dead to speak and play the guitar? Somebody is fooling them, or maybe they are fooling themselves. I can't make it out about Semén. (*Looking through the album.*) Here is their spiritualistic album. How can one take a photograph of a spirit? Here is a picture of a Turk sitting with Leoníd Fédorovich — A wonderful human weakness!

SCENE XI. Fédor Iványch and Leoníd Fédorovich.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH (*entering*). Well, is everything ready?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH (*rising without haste*). Yes. (*Smiling.*) Only I am afraid your new medium may disgrace himself, Leoníd Fédorovich.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. No, Aleksyéy Vladímirovich and I have tested him. He is a wonderfully strong medium!

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. I do not know about that. But is he clean? You have not troubled yourself about ordering him to wash his hands. It might cause some inconvenience.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. His hands? Oh, yes! You think they might be dirty?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Yes, he being a peasant. And there will be ladies present, and Márya Vasílevna.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Let them be!

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. I wanted to tell you something else: Timoféy, the coachman, came to complain about the dogs; he says it is impossible to keep clean on account of them.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH (*placing things on the table, distractedly*). What dogs?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. They brought three greyhounds from Vasíli Leonídych this morning, and they were put in the coachman's room.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH (*annoyed*). Tell Anna Pávlovna about it! Let her do as she pleases! I have no time.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. You know her weakness for Vasíli Leonídych —

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Let her do as she pleases. From him nothing but annoyance — Well, I have no time.

SCENE XII. The same and Semén (*in sleeveless coat, enters smiling*).

SEMÉN. Did you call me?

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Yes, yes. Let me see your hands! All right, all right! So, my dear, you do just

as you did before ! Sit down and abandon yourself to your feeling ! Don't do any thinking.

SEMÉN. Why should I think ? It is only worse if you do.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. That's it, that's it ! The less you are conscious, the stronger it will be. Don't do any thinking, and abandon yourself to your mood : if you feel like sleeping, sleep ; if you feel like walking, walk ; you understand ?

SEMÉN. Why should I not understand ? There is no cunning in this !

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. The main thing is not to get confused, for you might be surprised at yourself. You must understand that just as we live, so the invisible world of spirits lives with us.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH (*correcting him*). Unseen feelings, you understand ?

SEMÉN (*laughing*). Why should I not ? What you say is so simple.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. If you feel like rising in the air, or something like it, don't lose courage.

SEMÉN. Why should I lose courage ? What do I care ?

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Well, then I will go and call them all. Is everything ready ?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. I think, yes.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. And the slates ?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. They are down-stairs. I will bring them in at once. (*Exit.*)

### SCENE XIII. Leoníd Fédorovich and Semén.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Well, all right, then. So don't get confused, and be at your ease !

SEMÉN. Shall I take off my coat ? That will make me more at my ease.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Your coat? No, no, keep it on!  
(*Exit.*)

SCENE XIV. Semén (*alone*).

SEMÉN. She told me to do the same again, and she will hurl around things as then. I wonder how it is she is not afraid.

SCENE XV. Semén and Tánya (*comes in without shoes in a dress of the colour of the wall-paper. Semén roars*).

TÁNYA. Hush! They will hear us! Rub some matches on your fingers as you did the last time. (*Rubs them on.*) Well, do you remember everything?

SEMÉN (*bending his fingers*). First, to moisten the matches. Wave the hands, — that is one thing. Then to gnash my teeth, — that is the second. I have forgotten the third.

TÁNYA. The third thing is the most important. Listen: when the paper falls on the table, and I ring a bell, you stretch out your arms like this. Stretch them out as far as you can and catch a person. Catch anybody that is sitting nearest to you. And when you get hold of some one, press as hard as you can. (*Laughs.*) Whether it be a lady or a gentleman, press as hard as you can, and don't let the person get away! Do it, as though you were asleep, and gnash your teeth, or bellow, like this — (*Bellows.*) When I begin to play on the guitar, act as though you were waking up! Stretch yourself, and wake up! Do you remember everything?

SEMÉN. I do, but it is too funny.

TÁNYA. Don't laugh! If you do, that will not be so bad. They will think you are doing it in your sleep. Only don't fall asleep for good, when they put out the lights.

SEMÉN. Don't be afraid! I will be pinching my ears.



TÁNYA. Do everything right, Semén dear. Only do everything, and don't be afraid! He will sign the paper, you will see he will. They are coming. (*Crawls under the sofa.*)

SCENE XVI. Semén and Tánya. *Enter*: Grossmann, Professor, Leoníd Fédorovich, Stout Lady, Sakhátov, and Anna Pávlovna. Semén stands at the door.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. If you please, all unbelievers! Notwithstanding the fact that to-night we have a new, casual medium, I expect some remarkable manifestations.

SAKHÁTOV. Very, very interesting!

STOUT LADY (*pointing to Semén*). *Mais il est très bien!*

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. As a peasant of the pantry, only —

SAKHÁTOV. Wives never believe in the affairs of their husbands. You do not admit at all?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Of course not. In Kápchich, it is true, there is something especial, but not so much, either.

STOUT LADY. Excuse me, Anna Pávlovna, you must not judge this way. Before I was married I once had a remarkable dream. You know, there are dreams of such a kind that you do not know when they begin and when they end. So I had such a dream —

SCENE XVII. The same, Vasíli Leonídych and Petríshchev (*enter*).

STOUT LADY. I had much revealed to me in that dream. Nowadays these young people (*pointing to Petríshchev and to Vasíli Leonídych*) deny everything.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. I never deny anything, let me tell you. Ah, what?

SCENE XVIII. The same. *Enter Betsy and Márya Konstantínovna. They begin to talk with Petríshchev.*

STOUT LADY. How can one deny the supernatural? They say that it does not agree with reason. But there may be a stupid reason, then what? Now, on Sadováya Street, — have you heard about it? — there was an apparition which came every night. The brother of my husband, — what do you call him? — not *beau frère*, but in Russian, — oh, I never can remember those Russian family relations, — well, he went there three nights in succession, and could not see anything, so I said —

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. So, who will stay?

STOUT LADY. I, I!

SAKHÁTOV. I!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA (*to Doctor*). And you, too, will stay?

DOCTOR. I want to see at least once what it is Aleksyéy Vladímirovich finds here. I can't deny without having had any proofs.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. And so you want me by all means to take them to-night?

DOCTOR. Take whom? Oh, the pills! Yes, take them, if you please! Yes, yes, take them — I will call again.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. If you please. (*Aloud.*) When you get through, *messieurs et mesdames*, please come to my apartment to rest from your emotion, and to finish the game of cards.

STOUT LADY. By all means.

SAKHÁTOV. Yes, yes! (*Anna Pávlovna exit.*)

SCENE XIX. The same, *without Anna Pávlovna.*

BETSY (*to Petríshchev*). I tell you, stay. I promise you unusual things. Will you wager?

MÁRYA KONSTANTÍNOVNA. Do you believe in it?

BETSY. To-night I do.

MÁRYA KONSTANTÍNOVNA (*to Petríshchev*). And do you believe?

PETRÍSHCHEV. "I believe not, I believe not thy cunning vows." Well, if Elizavéta Leonídovna commands—

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Let us stay, Márya Konstantínovna! Ah, what? I will concoct something *épâtant*.

MÁRYA KONSTANTÍNOVNA. No, don't make me laugh. I can't keep from laughing.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH (*aloud*). I will stay!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH (*sternly*). All I ask is that those who stay will not turn this into a joke. This is a serious matter.

PETRÍSHCHEV. You hear? Well, we will stay. Vovó, sit down here, and don't you lose your courage!

BETSY. You are laughing, but wait and see!

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Well, what is it indeed? It will be a fine thing! Ah, what?

PETRÍSHCHEV (*trembling*). Oh, I am afraid, I am afraid. Márya Konstantínovna, I am afraid! My little legs are trembling.

BETSY (*laughing*). Hush up! (*All sit down.*)

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Sit down, if you please! Semén, sit down!

SEMÉN. Yes, sir. (*Sits down on the edge of the chair.*)

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Sit down better!

PROFESSOR. Sit down regularly, on the middle of the chair, at your ease. (*Seats Semén.*)

(*Betsy, Márya Konstantínovna, and Vasíli Leonídych laugh.*)

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH (*raising his voice*). I ask those who remain not to jest, but to take the matter seriously. There might be evil consequences. Vovó, do you hear? If you can't sit quietly, go out!

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Quiet! (*Hides himself behind the back of Stout Lady.*)

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Aleksyéy Vladímirovich, put him in a trance!

PROFESSOR. No, Antón Borísovich is here, and he has more practice in this matter than I, and power — Antón Borísovich!

GROSSMANN. Ladies and gentlemen, I am not really a spiritualist. I have only studied hypnosis. Hypnosis I have studied, it is true, in all its known manifestations, but that which is called spiritualism is entirely unknown to me. From the trance of a subject I may expect certain familiar phenomena of hypnosis: lethargy, aboulia, anæsthesia, analgesia, catalepsy, and all kinds of suggestion. But here not these, but other phenomena are to be subjected to investigation, and so it would be desirable to know what these expected phenomena are, and what scientific significance they have.

SAKHÁTOV. I fully concur with Mr. Grossmann's opinion. Such an elucidation would be very interesting.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH (*to the Professor*). I think, Aleksyéy Vladímirovich, you will not refuse to make a short explanation.

PROFESSOR. I do not object. I can explain it, if you so wish. (*To the Doctor*.) You, please, measure the temperature and pulse. My exposition will, unavoidably, be superficial and brief.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Yes, brief, brief.

DOCTOR. Directly. (*Takes out a thermometer and gives it to Semén*.) Well, my good fellow! (*Places it in his mouth*.)

SEMÉN. Yes, sir.

PROFESSOR (*rising and turning to the Stout Lady, then sitting down*). Ladies and gentlemen! The phenomenon which we are investigating generally represents itself, on the one hand, as something novel, and, on the other, as something transcending the natural order of things. Neither the one nor the other is correct. This phenome-

non is not new, but as old as the world, and not supernatural, but is subject to the same eternal laws to which everything in existence is subject. This phenomenon has usually been defined as a communion with the spiritual world. This definition is not exact. According to this definition, the spiritual world is opposed to the material world, but this is not right: there is no such opposition. Both worlds are contiguous, so that it is impossible to draw a line of demarcation, which should separate the one world from the other. We say that matter is composed of molecules —

PETRÍSHCHEV. Dull matter! (*Whispering, laughter.*)

PROFESSOR (*stopping, and then continuing*). Molecules of atoms, but atoms, having no extension, are in reality nothing but points of application of forces, that is, strictly speaking, not of forces, but of energy, — of that same energy which is as one and indestructible as matter. But just as matter is one and its forms are different, even so it is with energy. Within recent time we have been acquainted with only four forms of energy, which change one into another. We know the dynamic, thermic, electrical, and chemical energies. But these four forms of energy are far from exhausting all the varieties of its manifestations. The forms of the manifestations of energy are manifold, and one of these new, little known forms of energy is now to be investigated by us. I am speaking of the energy of mediumism.

(*Again whispers and laughter in the corner of the young people.*)

PROFESSOR (*stops and, looking sternly around him, continues*). The mediumistic energy has been known to humanity since time immemorial: predictions, presentiments, visions, and many others, — all those are nothing else but manifestations of mediumistic energy. The phenomena produced by it have been known since time immemorial. But the energy itself has not been acknowl-

edged as such until recently, when, at last, we came to acknowledge the medium, the vibration of which produces the mediumistic phenomena. And just as the phenomena of light remained inexplicable until the existence of an imponderable substance, that of ether, was accepted, even so mediumistic phenomena seemed mysterious as long as we did not accept the now undoubted truth that in the interstices of the ether there is another even more delicate and imponderable substance, which is not subject to the law of the three dimensions —

*(Again whisper, laughter, and squeaking.)*

PROFESSOR *(again looking sternly around him)*. And just as mathematical calculations have irrefragably confirmed the existence of imponderable ether which produces the phenomena of light and electricity, even so a brilliant series of most exact investigations of Hermann, Schmidt, and Joseph Schmatzofen have undeniably confirmed the existence of that substance which fills the universe and which may be denominated as spiritual ether.

STOUT LADY. Now I understand. How thankful I am —

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Yes. But, Alekseyéy Vladímirovich, can't you — abbreviate — a little?

PROFESSOR *(without replying to him)*. And thus, a series of strictly scientific experiments and investigations, as I have had the honour of informing you, has made clear to us the laws of mediumistic phenomena. These experiments have made it clear to us that the putting of certain individuals into a hypnotic state, which differs from common sleep only in that by falling into this sleep the physiological activity is not only not lowered, but always raised, as we have just seen, — it has become manifest that the putting into this condition of any subject whatsoever invariably causes certain perturbations in the spiritual ether, — perturbations which completely resemble those



perturbations which are produced by the immersion of a solid body in a liquid. These perturbations are what we call mediumistic phenomena — (*Laughter, whispering.*)

SAKHÁTOV. This is quite just and intelligible; but permit me to ask you: If, as you have said, putting a medium to sleep produces perturbations of the spiritual ether, why, then, do these perturbations find their expressions, as is generally understood in spiritualistic séances, in manifestations of the activity of dead persons?

PROFESSOR. Because the particles of this spiritual ether are nothing but the souls of the living, the dead, and those not born, so that every concussion of this spiritual ether inevitably causes a certain motion of its particles. But these particles are nothing but the souls of men which by this motion are brought into communion.

STOUT LADY (*to Sakháto*). What is there here not to understand? This is so simple — I thank you very, very much!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. It seems to me that everything is clear now, and that we can begin.

DOCTOR. The lad is in the most normal of conditions: temperature, 37.2; pulse, 74.

PROFESSOR (*takes out a note-book, and makes a memorandum*). As a confirmation of that which I have had the honour of presenting to you will be the fact that putting the medium to sleep inevitably brings with it, as we shall soon see, a rise in temperature and pulse, just as in the case of hypnosis.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Pardon me, but I should like to answer Sergyéy Iványch's question as to how it is we know that the spirits of deceased persons are communing with us. We know this because the spirit who comes tells us so straight out, — just as simply as I am saying this, — he tells us who he is, why he has come, where he is, and whether he is happy. At the last séance came

the Spaniard Don Castillos, and he told us everything. He told us who he was, and when he died, and that he was suffering for having taken part in the Inquisition. More than that: he informed us of what was taking place during the very time he was speaking with us, namely, while he was speaking with us he had to be reborn upon earth, and so he could not finish the conversation which he had begun — Well, you will see for yourself.

STOUT LADY (*interrupting him*). Ah, how interesting! Maybe the Spaniard was born in our house, and is now a baby.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Not impossible.

PROFESSOR. I think it is time to begin.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. I only wanted to say —

PROFESSOR. It is late already.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Well, all right. So we can begin. Antón Borísovich, please, put the medium to sleep —

GROSSMANN. How do you wish me to put the subject to sleep? There are many possible means. There is Brede's system, there is the Egyptian symbol, there is Charcot's system.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH (*to Professor*). That makes no difference, I think.

PROFESSOR. It is a matter of indifference.

GROSSMANN. Then I will apply my own system, which I have demonstrated in Odessa.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. If you please!

(*Grossmann waves his hands over Semén. Semén closes his eyes and stretches himself.*)

GROSSMANN (*looking closely at him*). He is falling asleep — He is asleep. A remarkably quick appearance of hypnosis! The subject has apparently already entered upon his anæsthetic condition. A remarkably, unusually receptive subject, and he might be subjected to interesting experiments! (*Sits down, gets up, and again*

sits down.) We now could put a needle through his hand. If you wish —

PROFESSOR (to Leoníd Fédorovich). Do you notice how the medium's sleep is affecting Grossmann? He is beginning to vibrate.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Yes, yes — Can we now put out the lights?

SAKHÁTOV. But why must we have darkness?

PROFESSOR. Darkness? Because darkness is one of the conditions under which mediumistic energy is manifested, just as a certain temperature is the condition for certain manifestations of chemical and dynamic energy.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Not always. Many people have things happen to them at candle-light, and even in daylight. They have happened to me.

PROFESSOR (interrupting him). May we now have the lights out?

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Yes, yes. (Puts out the lights.) Ladies and gentlemen! Please pay attention now!

(Tánya crawls out from under the sofa and takes hold of the thread which is attached to the candelabrum.)

PETRÍSHCHEV. Really, I like the Spaniard. How, during the conversation, he — down his head — how do you translate *piquer une tête*?

BETSY. No, you just wait, and you will see what will happen!

PETRÍSHCHEV. I am afraid of one thing only, and that is, that Vovó will grunt like a pig.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Do you want me to do it? I will grab —

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Ladies and gentlemen! I ask you not to speak —

(Silence. Semén sucks his finger, rubs the spittle on his knuckles, and waves his hands.)

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. A light! Do you see a light?

SAKHÁTOV. A light? Yes, yes, I see, but permit me —

STOUT LADY. Where, where? Ah, I have not seen it! There it is! Ah!

PROFESSOR (*to Leoníd Fédorovich, in a whisper, pointing to Grossmann, who is moving about*). Notice how he is vibrating! A double force! (*Again a phosphorescence.*)

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH (*to Professor*). That is he?

SAKHÁTOV. What he?

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. The Greek Nicholas. It is his light. Is it not so, Aleksyéy Vladímirovich?

SAKHÁTOV. Who is this Greek Nicholas?

PROFESSOR. A certain Greek, who was a monk in the time of Constantine at Constantinople and who visited us last time.

STOUT LADY. Where is he, where? I do not see.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. He cannot be seen yet — Aleksyéy Vladímirovich, he is always especially well disposed to you. Ask him!

PROFESSOR (*in a peculiar voice*). Nicholas, is it you?

(*Tánya raps twice against the wall.*)

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH (*joyfully*). He, he!

STOUT LADY. Oh, oh! I am going away!

SAKHÁTOV. On what ground is it assumed that it is he?

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Two raps are an affirmative answer. Else there would have been a silence.

(*Silence. Repressed laughter in the young people's corner. Tánya throws upon the table a lamp-shade, a pencil, and a pen-wiper.*)

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH (*in a whisper*). Notice, ladies and gentlemen, here is a lamp-shade. Something else. A pencil! Aleksyéy Vladímirovich, a pencil!

PROFESSOR. All right, all right. I am watching him and Grossmann. Do you notice?

*(Grossmann rises and looks at the objects which have fallen on the table.)*

SAKHÁTOV. Excuse me, excuse me! I should like to see whether the medium is not doing it all himself.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Do you think so? Then sit down near him, and hold his hands. But you may be sure he is asleep.

SAKHÁTOV *(walks over, catches with his head into the thread, which Tánya has lowered, and stoops in fright)*. Yes! Strange, strange! *(Goes up, takes Semén by the elbow. Semén bellows.)*

PROFESSOR *(to Leoníd Fédorovich)*. Do you hear how Grossmann's presence affects him? A new phenomenon, — I must note it down — *(Runs out of the room, notes it down, and returns.)*

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Yes. But we ought not to leave Nicholas without an answer. We ought to begin —

GROSSMANN *(gets up, walks over to Semén, raises and drops his hand)*. Now it would be interesting to produce a contracture. The subject is in a state of absolute hypnosis.

PROFESSOR *(to Leoníd Fédorovich)*. Do you see, do you see?

GROSSMANN. If you wish —

DOCTOR. Permit, sir, Aleksyéy Vladímirovich to go through with it: it is a serious matter.

PROFESSOR. Leave him alone! He is already speaking in his sleep.

STOUT LADY. How glad I am I have decided to stay! It frightens me, but still I am glad, because I always told my husband —

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. I beg you to keep quiet.

*(Tánya passes the thread over the head of the Stout Lady.)*

STOUT LADY. Ouch!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. What, what is it?

STOUT LADY. He took me by my hair!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH (*in a whisper*). Don't be afraid! It will not hurt! Give him your hand! The hand is generally cold, but I like it.

STOUT LADY (*hiding her hands*). Not for the world!

SAKHÁTOV. Yes, it is strange, it is strange.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. He is here and wants to communicate. Who wants to ask any question?

SAKHÁTOV. Please let me ask?—Do I believe, or not? (*Tánya raps twice.*)

PROFESSOR. An affirmative answer.

SAKHÁTOV. Allow me to ask again. Have I a tenrouble bill in my pocket?

(*Tánya raps several times and passes the thread over Sakhátov's head.*)

SAKHÁTOV. Ah! (*Catches the thread and breaks it off.*)

PROFESSOR. I should like those present not to put any indefinite or jocular remarks. He does not like it.

SAKHÁTOV. Excuse me, but I have a thread in my hand.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. A thread? Keep it! That frequently happens. Not only threads, but silk cords, very antique cords, too.

SAKHÁTOV. Still, where does the thread come from?

(*Tánya throws a cushion at him.*)

SAKHÁTOV. Excuse me, excuse me! Something soft has struck my head. Let us have some light. There is something here—

PROFESSOR. We beg you not to interfere with the manifestations.

STOUT LADY. For the Lord's sake, don't interfere! I want to ask something. May I?

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. You may, you may. Ask him!



STOUT LADY. I want to ask about my stomach. May I? I want to ask what I had better take, aconite or belladonna?

*(Silence. Whispering in the young people's corner, and suddenly Vasili Leonídych cries like a suckling babe: "Ooah, ooah!" Laughter. Holding their noses and mouths, and snorting, the young women run out with Petrishchev.)*

STOUT LADY. Ah, no doubt, this monk is born anew!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH *(furious, in an angry whisper)*. You can't do anything but foolish things! If you can't behave, go out! *(Vasili Leonídych exit.)*

SCENE XX. Leoníd Fédorovich, Professor, Stout Lady, Sakhátov, Grossmann, Doctor, Semén, and Tánya. *Darkness and silence.*

STOUT LADY. Oh, what a pity! Now I can't ask any more! He is born now!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Not at all. That was Vovó's foolishness. *He* is here. Ask him!

PROFESSOR. This often happens: these jests and this ridicule are a very common phenomenon. I assume that *he* is still here. Anyway, we may ask. Leoníd Fédorovich, you ask!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. No, if you please, you ask! This has put me out. It is so disagreeable! This tactlessness —

PROFESSOR. All right! All right! Nicholas, are you here?

*(Tánya raps twice and rings the bell. Semén begins to bellow and to wave his hands. Gets hold of Sakhátov and of the Professor and chokes them.)*

PROFESSOR. Such an unexpected manifestation! An interaction on the medium himself. This is entirely new. Leoníd Fédorovich, you keep watch, I am in an uncom-

fortable position. He is choking me. See what Grossmann is doing. Now you must be as attentive as possible.

*(Tánya throws the peasants' paper on the table.)*

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Something has fallen on the table.

PROFESSOR. See what it is.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. A paper! A folded sheet of paper! *(Tánya throws a pocket inkstand on the table.)*

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. An inkstand!

*(Tánya throws a pen on the table.)*

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. A pen!

*(Semén bellows and chokes them.)*

PROFESSOR *(out of breath)*. Excuse me, this is an absolutely new phenomenon. Not the elicited mediumistic energy is here at work, but the medium himself. Open the inkstand, and put the pen on the paper! He will write.

*(Tánya walks up to Leoníd Fédorovich from behind, and bangs his head with the guitar.)*

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. He has struck my head! *(Looking at the table.)* The pen is not writing yet, and the paper is folded.

PROFESSOR. See what kind of paper it is, and be quick about it! Apparently a double force, his and Grossmann's, is producing the perturbations.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH *(goes out with the paper, and immediately returns)*. Extraordinary! This paper is a contract with the peasants, which I declined this morning to sign, and which I gave back to the peasants. Apparently *he* wants me to sign it.

PROFESSOR. Of course! Of course! You ask him!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Nicholas! Shall I do so?

*(Tánya raps twice.)*

PROFESSOR. Do you hear? There is no doubt about it!

(*Leoníd Fédorovich takes the pen and goes out. Tánya raps, plays on the guitar and accordion, and again creeps under the sofa. Leoníd Fédorovich returns. Semén stretches himself and coughs.*)

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. He is waking up. May I light the candles?

PROFESSOR (*hurriedly*). Doctor, doctor, if you please, the temperature and pulse! You will see that there will prove to be a rise.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH (*lights the candles*). Well, unbelievers?

DOCTOR (*going up to Semén and putting the thermometer into his mouth*). Well, my good fellow? Have you slept well? Put this in your mouth, and let me have your hand! (*Looks at his watch.*)

SAKHÁTOV (*shrugging his shoulders*). I can affirm that the medium did not do any of these things. But the thread? I should like to have an explanation of the thread.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. The thread, the thread! There were more serious phenomena than that!

SAKHÁTOV. I do not know. But, in any case, *je réserve mon opinion*.

STOUT LADY (*to Sakhátov*). How can you say: *Je réserve mon opinion*? And what about the baby with the wings? Did you not see him? At first I thought I was only dreaming; but later it was as clear, as clear, as though he were alive —

SAKHÁTOV. I can speak only of what I have seen. I did not see that, I did not.

STOUT LADY. Well! It was so plain. On the left side the monk in black attire leaned down over him —

SAKHÁTOV (*walking away*). What exaggeration!

STOUT LADY (*turning to the Doctor*). You must have seen it. He rose on your side. (*Doctor, paying no attention to her, continues to count the pulse.*)

STOUT LADY (*to Grossmann*). And there was a light

from him, especially around the face. And his expression was so gentle, so truly angelic! (*Smiles gently herself.*)

GROSSMANN. I saw a phosphorescent light and that objects changed places, but nothing else.

STOUT LADY. Don't say that! You are just joking. You do so because you, learned men of the school of Charcot, do not believe in the life after death. Nobody will now make me change my faith in a future life! (*Grossmann walks away from her.*)

STOUT LADY. No, you may say what you please, but this is one of the happiest moments of my life. When Sarasate played, and this one — Yes! (*Nobody pays any attention to her. She goes up to Semén.*) Tell me, my friend, how did you feel? Was it hard for you?

SEMÉN (*laughing*). Yes, madam.

STOUT LADY. Still, you could stand it?

SEMÉN. Yes, madam. (*To Leoníd Fédorovich.*) May I go?

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Go, go!

DOCTOR (*to Professor*). The pulse is the same, but the temperature is lower.

PROFESSOR. Lower? (*In thought and suddenly making it out.*) That is what it ought to be, — there ought to be a fall! The double energy, crossing, ought to have produced something in the nature of an interference. Yes, yes.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. I am sorry that there was no complete materialization, but still — Ladies and gentlemen, please go to the drawing-room!

STOUT LADY. I was particularly impressed by the flapping of his wings, and I could see him rise in the air.

GROSSMANN (*to Sakhátov*). If one were to stick to hypnosis alone, one might produce complete epilepsy. The success might be absolute.

SAKHÁTOV. Interesting, but not convincing, — that is all I can say!

Speaking together.

SCENE XXI. Leoníd Fédorovich *with the paper. Enter Fédor Iványch.*

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Well, Fédor, it was a remarkable séance! It now turns out that I must give the peasants the land upon their own conditions.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Indeed!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. I should say so! (*Shows the paper to him.*) Just think of it! The paper which I had returned to them was thrown down on the table. I signed it.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. How did it get there?

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. It just got there. (*Exit, Fédor Iványch follows him out.*)

SCENE XXII. Tánya (*alone, creeping out from underneath the sofa, and laughing.*)

TÁNYA. My saints! How frightened I got when he caught hold of the thread! (*Squeaking.*) Still, it has come out all right, — he has signed it!

SCENE XXIII. Tánya and Grigóri.

GRIGÓRI. So it is you who has been fooling them?

TÁNYA. What is that to you?

GRIGÓRI. Do you suppose the lady will praise you for it? No, you are mistaken! Now you are caught. I will tell of your tricks, if you will not do as I want you to.

TÁNYA. I will not do as you want me to, and you won't dare to do anything to me.

*Curtain.*

## ACT IV.

*The theatre represents the scene of the First Act.*

SCENE I. Two footmen in liveries, Fédor Iványch, and Grigóri.

FIRST FOOTMAN (*with gray side-whiskers*). You are the third to-day. I am glad the receptions are all in the same part of the city. You used to have them on Thursdays.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Then we changed it to Saturday, so as to have it on the same day with the Golóvkins, and with Grade-von-Grabe —

SECOND FOOTMAN. It is so nice at the Shcherbakóvs: the lackeys are treated as though there were a ball there.

SCENE II. The same. *The Princess and her Daughter descend the stairs. Betsy sees them off. The Princess looks into a note-book and at the clock, and sits down on the clothes-chest. Grigóri puts on her overshoes.*

YOUNG PRINCESS. Yes, be sure and come! If you don't come, and Dodo does not, — there will nothing come of it.

BETSY. I do not know. I must go to the Shúbins anyway. Then comes the rehearsal.

YOUNG PRINCESS. You will have time. Do come! *Ne nous fais pas faux bond!* Fédyá and Coco will be there.

BETSY. *J'en ai par dessus la tête de votre Coco.*



YOUNG PRINCESS. I thought I should find him here.  
*Ordinairement il est d'une exactitude.*

BETSY. He certainly will be here.

YOUNG PRINCESS. When I see him with you, I always think that he has just proposed to you, or that he will do so in a minute.

BETSY. I suppose I shall have to go through it. It is so unpleasant!

YOUNG PRINCESS. Poor Coco! He is so in love!

BETSY. *Cessez, les gens!*

*(Young Princess sits down on the sofa, speaking in a whisper. Grigóri puts on her overshoes.)*

YOUNG PRINCESS. Good-bye until evening!

BETSY. I will try.

PRINCESS. Tell your papa that I do not believe a thing, but that I will come to see his new medium, if he will let me know when. Good-bye, *ma toute belle!* *(Kisses her and exit with Young Princess. Betsy goes up-stairs.)*

SCENE III. The two footmen, Fédor Iványch, and Grigóri.

GRIGÓRI. I do not like to put overshoes on old women: they don't bend, and they can't see anything, because their bellies are so large, and so they keep sticking their feet anywhere but into the overshoes. It is quite different with a young woman: it is pleasant to take her foot into the hand.

SECOND FOOTMAN. How dainty he is!

FIRST LACKEY. It is not for people of our class to be dainty.

GRIGÓRI. Why should we not be dainty? Are we not human beings? They think we do not understand anything: when they began to talk, they looked at me, and immediately said "*les gens.*"

SECOND FOOTMAN. What does that mean?

GRIGÓRI. That means in Russian: "Don't say it, for

they will understand!" They say the same thing at dinner, but I understand it. You say there is a difference, but I say there is none.

FIRST FOOTMAN. There is a great difference, if a person understands anything.

GRIGÓRI. There is no difference whatsoever. To-day I am a lackey, and to-morrow I may be living as well as they. Fine women sometimes marry lackeys: such things have happened. I will go and take a smoke. (*Exit.*)

SCENE IV. The same, *without* Grigóri.

SECOND FOOTMAN. That young fellow of yours is a bold chap.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. A worthless lad and unfit for service: he has served in an office, and that has spoiled him. I advised against taking him, but the lady wanted him because he makes such a fine appearance in the carriage.

FIRST FOOTMAN. I should like to see him serving under our count: he would straighten him out in no time. Oh, how he hates such sleek fellows! If you are a lackey, stay a lackey, and do justice to your calling! This pride does not become him.

SCENE V. The same. Petríshchev *runs down-stairs and takes out a cigarette.*

PETRÍSHCHEV (*in thought*). Yes, yes. No "ta" — my second. No-ta-ry. My whole — Yes, yes. (*Coco Klín-gen, in eye-glasses, enters, and goes up to him.*) Ah, Cocolate, Chocolate! Where do you come from?

COCO KLÍNGEN. From the Shcherbakóvs. Will you never stop your foolishness?

PETRÍSHCHEV. Just listen to my charade: My first is no "rial"; no "ta" — my second; my whole is quite contrary.

COCO KLÍNGEN. I don't know, I don't know, and I have no time.

PETRÍSHCHEV. Where are you going?

COCO KLÍNGEN. Where am I going? To the Ivins, to practise singing. Then to the Shúbins, and then to the rehearsal. Aren't you going to be there?

PETRÍSHCHEV. Of course I will. I will be at the re-hearse-al and at the re-burial. I was a savage before, and now I am both a savage and a general.

COCO KLÍNGEN. Well, how was the séance last night?

PETRÍSHCHEV. It was killing! There was a peasant there; but the main thing is it was all in the dark. Vovó mewled like a baby, the professor explained, and Márya Vasílevna made glosses. It was great fun! What a pity you were not there!

COCO KLÍNGEN. I am afraid, *mon cher*. You manage to keep out of trouble with all your jokes; but it seems to me that the moment I say a word, they will make me out as having proposed. *Et ça ne m'arrange pas du tout, du tout. Mais du tout, du tout!*

PETRÍSHCHEV. You make a proposition with a predicate, and nothing will happen to you. Go in to Vovó's, and we will go together to the re-burial.

COCO KLÍNGEN. I can't understand how you can keep company with such an ass. He is so stupid, — such a real good-for-nothing!

PETRÍSHCHEV. I love him. I love Vovó, but "with a strange love," "to him the people's path will not be overgrown —" (*Goes into Vasíli Leonídych's room.*)

SCENE VI. The two lackeys, Fédor Iványch, and Coco Klíngen. Betsy sees Lady off

(*Coco makes a deep bow.*)

BETSY (*shakes his head sideways. To the Lady*). Are you not acquainted?

LADY. No.

BETSY. Baron Klíngen — Why were you not here yesterday?

COCO KLÍNGEN. I could not, — I was so busy.

BETSY. What a pity! It was so interesting. (*Laughing.*) You ought to have seen what manifestations there were! Well, how is our charade getting on?

COCO KLÍNGEN. Oh, yes! The verses for my second are ready. Nik has made them up, and I have added the music.

BETSY. How is it, how? Let me hear them!

COCO KLÍNGEN. *Nature is so beautiful*

*Where bananas native are,*

*Nanna, Nanna! Na, na, na!*

LADY. My second is *na*, and what is my first?

COCO KLÍNGEN. My first is *Are*, the name of a savage woman.

BETSY. *Are*, you see, is a savage, who wants to eat up the object of her love. (*Laughs loud.*) She walks around, and pines, and sings.

*Ah, my appetite!*

COCO KLÍNGEN (*interrupting her*).

*If I but had a bite!*

BETSY (*continues*).

*I want some one to eat,*

*I walk with saddened mind —*

COCO KLÍNGEN.

*No person do I find —*

BETSY.

*No flesh to chew, no meat —*

COCO KLÍNGEN.

*Behold, a raft I see —*

BETSY.

*It is swimming to me,*

*On it two generals are —*

COCO KLÍNGEN.

Generals we are,  
Fate has brought us from afar,  
Fate has brought us, — here we are !

And again the refrain :

Fate has brought us from afar,  
Fate has brought us, — here we are !

LADY. *Charmant !*

BETSY. Do you perceive how stupid it is ?

COCO KLÍNGEN. But that is where the charm of it is !

LADY. Who is Are ?

BETSY. I. I have had a costume made, but mamma says it is indecent. It is not a bit more indecent than a ball-dress. (*To Fédor Iványch.*) Well, is the man here from Bourdier ?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Yes, he is sitting in the kitchen.

LADY. Well, and how is the Arena going to be ?

BETSY. You will see. I do not wish to spoil your pleasure. *Au revoir.*

LADY. Good-bye ! (*They bow to each other. Lady exit.*)

BETSY (*to Coco Klíngen*). Let us go to mamma !  
(*Betsy and Coco Klíngen ascend the stairs.*)

SCENE VII. Fédor Iványch, the two lackeys, and Yákov  
(*comes out of the butler's room, with a tray, on which there are glasses of tea and pastry. Walks through the anteroom, out of breath.*).

YÁKOV (*to the lackeys*). My regards to you, my regards !

(*The lackeys bow.*)

YÁKOV (*to Fédor Iványch*). Can't you tell Grigóri Mikhálych to give me a lift ? Getting things ready has tired me out. (*Exit.*)

SCENE VIII. The same, *without* Yákov.

FIRST FOOTMAN. He is a hard-working man !

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. He is a good man, but the lady does not like him. She says he does not make a good appearance. They accused him yesterday of letting some peasants into the kitchen, and I am afraid they will discharge him. And he is such a nice fellow.

SECOND FOOTMAN. What peasants ?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Some peasants from our Kursk village came to buy some land. It was night-time, and they are his countrymen. One of them is also the father of the peasant of the pantry. So they took them to the kitchen. They happened to have mind-reading here last night : they hid something in the kitchen. Then all the company went into the kitchen, and there the lady saw them. Well, it was terrible ! "These people," says she, "might be infected, and you let them stay in the kitchen !" She is dreadfully afraid of the infection.

SCENE IX. The same *and* Grigóri.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Go, Grigóri, and help Yákov Iványch, while I will stay here by myself. He can't get it done himself.

GRIGÓRI. He can't get it done because he is awkward.  
(*Exit.*)

SCENE X. The same, *without* Grigóri.

FIRST FOOTMAN. A new fashion they have started with this infection ! And so your lady is afraid of it, too ?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. She is afraid of it worse than of



fire. We are doing nothing now but fumigating, washing, and sprinkling.

FIRST FOOTMAN. I thought I smelled something strong. (*With animation.*) It is a perfect shame how they carry on with these infections. Perfectly disgraceful! They have forgotten God. The daughter of Princess Mosólov, the sister of our master, died. What do you suppose they did? Neither father nor mother came into the room to bid her farewell. And the daughter kept weeping and begging for her parents to tell them good-bye, but they did not go in. The doctor had discovered some kind of an infection. And yet the chambermaid and a nurse attended to her, and they are alive!

SCENE XI. The same, Vasíli Leonídych, and Petríshchev (*coming out of the door with cigarettes*).

PETRÍSHCHEV. Let us go! I just want to fetch Cocolate — Chocolate.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Your Cocolate is a stupid! Let me tell you: I can't bear him. He is such a brainless fellow, a genuine loafer! He does nothing but loaf. Ah, what?

PETRÍSHCHEV. Wait, anyway! I want to tell him good-bye.

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. All right. I will go and take a look in the coachman's room. One of the dogs is so vicious that the coachman says he has almost eaten him up. Ah, what?

PETRÍSHCHEV. Who has eaten whom? Do you mean to tell me that the coachman has eaten up the dog?

VASÍLI LEONÍDYCH. Your eternal jokes — (*Puts on his wraps and exit.*)

PETRÍSHCHEV (*in thought*). Ma-no-rial, no-ta-ry — Yes, yes. (*Goes up-stairs.*)

SCENE XII. The two footmen, Fédor Iványch, and Yákov (*who runs over the stage in the beginning and at the end of the scene*).

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH (*to Yákov*). What is it again?

YÁKOV. I did not bring the sandwiches! I said — (*Exit.*)

SECOND FOOTMAN. Then our young master fell ill, so they took him with a nurse to a hotel, and there he died without his mother.

FIRST FOOTMAN. They are forgetting God; but I think you can't get away from God.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. I think so myself. (*Yákov runs upstairs with the sandwiches.*)

FIRST FOOTMAN. You must consider that if you are to be afraid of everything, you will have to shut yourself up within four walls, as in a prison, and stay there.

SCENE XIII. The same and Tánya, then Yákov.

TÁNYA (*bowing to the footmen*). Good evening! (*The footmen bow.*)

TÁNYA. Fédor Iványch, I have a word or two to tell you.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Well, what is it?

TÁNYA. Fédor Iványch, the peasants have come back —

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. What of it? I gave the paper to Semén —

TÁNYA. I gave them the paper. I can't tell you how thankful they are. Now they ask that their money be accepted.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Where are they?

TÁNYA. They are standing near the porch.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Well, I will report it.

TÁNYA. I, too, want to ask you for something, dear Fédor Iványch.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. What is it?

TÁNYA. Fédor Iványch, I can't stay here any longer. Will you ask for my dismissal? (*Yákov running in.*)

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH (*to Yákov*). What do you want?

YÁKOV. Another samovár, and some oranges.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Ask the housekeeper for them! (*Yákov runs away.*)

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. What is that for?

TÁNYA. Why, you know what I want to do!

YÁKOV (*running in*). There are not enough oranges there.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Serve as many as there are. (*Yákov runs away.*) You have chosen a bad time: you see what an upheaval there is here now —

TÁNYA. You know yourself, Fédor Iványch, that there will be no end to this upheaval, no matter how long I may wait, and what I am about to do is for a lifetime — You, dear Fédor Iványch, have already done me a great favour. Be now again in place of my own father, and choose the right time and tell the master about it. Or else he will get angry, and will not let me have my papers.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. You are in a terrible hurry!

TÁNYA. Everything has been settled, Fédor Iványch, and I should like to go back to godmother, and get ready. The wedding is to be after Quasimodo Sunday. Do tell him, Fédor Iványch!

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Go now, — this is not the place for you just now.

(*An elderly gentleman comes down-stairs and, without saying a word, goes away with Second Footman. Tánya exit.*)

SCENE XIV. Fédor Iványch, First Footman, and Yákov (*who enters*).

YÁKOV. Fédor Iványch, this is a burning shame! She wants to discharge me. She says: "You are bun-

gling everything, and you do not attend to Fifi, and you took the peasants to the kitchen against my order." You know yourself that I did not know anything about it. Tatyána told me to take them to the kitchen, and I did not know by whose order it was.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Did she talk to you about it?

YÁKOV. This very minute. Fédor Iványch, intercede for me! My family has just been getting on its legs, and if I should lose this place, who knows when I should find another? Fédor Iványch, do me the favour!

SCENE XV. Fédor Iványch, First Footman, and Anna Pávlovna *seeing off* Old Countess, *with false teeth and hair*. First Footman *puts the wraps on the* Countess.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Of course. I am truly touched.

COUNTESS. If it were not for my ill health, I should come to see you more frequently.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Really, you ought to try Peter Petróvich. He is rough, but no one will soothe you better. Everything is so simple and clear with him.

COUNTESS. No, I am used to my own doctor.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Look out!

COUNTESS. *Merci, mille fois merci!*

SCENE XVI. The same and Grigóri (*dishevelled, in agitation, runs out from the butler's room. Behind him is seen Semén*).

SEMÉN. You leave her alone!

GRIGÓRI. I will teach you, rascal, how to fight! You good-for-nothing!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. What is this? Are you in an inn?

GRIGÓRI. I can't stand this coarse peasant.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. You are crazy! Don't you see?  
(*To the Countess.*) *Merci, mille fois merci! A mardi!*  
(*Countess and First Footman exeunt.*)

SCENE XVII. Fédor Iványch, Anna Pávlovna, Grigóri,  
and Semén.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA (*to Grigóri*). What is this?

GRIGÓRI. Although I am only a lackey, I have my pride, and I will not allow any peasant to push me.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. But what has happened?

GRIGÓRI. Semén has become stuck up from having sat with gentlemen, and now he fights.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. What is it? For what?

GRIGÓRI. God knows.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA (*to Semén*). What does this mean?

SEMÉN. Let him keep away from her!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. What has happened between you?

SEMÉN (*smiling*). It is like this: he keeps grabbing chambermaid Tánya, and she does not want him to do it. So I pushed him a little aside.

GRIGÓRI. I should say he did push me aside! He nearly broke my ribs. He has torn my dress coat. He said: "My strength of yesterday has come back to me," and he began to choke me.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA (*to Semén*). How dare you fight in my house?

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Permit me to inform you, Anna Pávlovna, that Semén has certain feelings for Tánya, and as they are engaged to be married, and Grigóri — I must tell you the truth — acts badly and dishonourably, I suppose, Semén would not stand his behaviour.

GRIGÓRI. Not at all. It is all because they are angry, knowing that I am up to their trickery.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. What trickery?

GRIGÓRI. At the séance. All the tricks of last night

were not done by Semén, but by Tatyána. I saw her myself creeping out from under the sofa.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. What? She crept out from under the sofa?

GRIGÓRI. My word of honour. She also brought the paper and threw it on the table. If it had not been for her, the paper would not have been signed, and the land would not have been sold to them.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. You saw it yourself?

GRIGÓRI. With my own eyes. Have her come in, and she will not deny it.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Call her in! (*Grigóri exit.*)

SCENE XVIII. The same, *without* Grigóri. *Noise behind the scenes; the Porter's voice: "You can't get in! Stop there!" The Porter appears, and the three peasants break in, past him. Second Peasant in front. Third Peasant stumbles, falls, and clasps his nose.*

PORTER. You can't go there! Get out!

SECOND PEASANT. No harm is meant! We are not up to any trouble. We want to give him the money.

FIRST PEASANT. In rivalry, since by the signature of the application of the hand our affair has come into a finishing, we wish to present the money with our gratitude.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Wait, wait! Don't thank! It was all a trick. It is not ended yet. The land is not sold yet. Leoníd! Call Leoníd Fédorovich! (*Porter exit.*)

SCENE XIX. The same *and* Leoníd Fédorovich, *who, seeing the peasants and Anna Pávlovna, wants to withdraw.*

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. No, no, please come here! I told you that the land must not be sold with an outstanding indebtedness, and everybody else told you so. And then you are deceived like a most stupid man.



LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. That is, how? I do not understand what deception you are speaking about.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. You ought to be ashamed! You have gray hair, and yet they deceive you like a boy and make fun of you. You begrudge your son some paltry three hundred roubles to help him in his social standing, and you yourself are cheated out of thousands like the greatest fool.

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Annette, calm yourself!

FIRST PEASANT. We are only in the reception of the sum, so to speak —

THIRD PEASANT (*draws out the money*). Send us away, for Christ's sake!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Wait, wait!

SCENE XX. The same, Grigóri, and Tánya.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA (*sternly to Tánya*). Were you in the drawing-room last night during the séance?

(*Tánya, sighing, looks at Fédor Iványch, Leoníd Fédorovich, and Semén.*)

GRIGÓRI. You needn't beat around the bush. I saw you there myself —

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Speak! Were you there? I know everything, so you had better confess. I only want to accuse him (*pointing to Leoníd Fédorovich*) — the master. Did you throw the paper on the table?

TÁNYA. I do not know what to answer, except to ask you to let me go home.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA (*to Leoníd Fédorovich*). Now, you see, they have been fooling you.

SCENE XXI. The same. *Enter Betsy in the beginning of the scene and stands unnoticed.*

TÁNYA. Let me go, Anna Pávlovna!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. No, my dear! You may have

caused a loss of several thousand. He sold the land which ought not to have been sold.

TÁNYA. Let me go, Anna Pávlovna!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. No, you will have to answer. You can't cheat like that. I will take you before a justice of the peace.

BETSY (*stepping forward*). Let her go, mother! If you wish to sue her, you will have to sue me, too: I did it all with her last night.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Of course, if you had anything to do with it, it could have been nothing but the nastiest thing.

SCENE XXII. The same and Professor.

PROFESSOR. Good day, Anna Pávlovna! Good day, madam! I am bringing you, Leoníd Fédorovich, the report of the thirteenth meeting of the spiritualists at Chicago. Schmidt delivered a wonderful speech!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Ah, that will be interesting!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. I will tell you something which is more interesting still. It turns out that this girl has been fooling you and my husband. Betsy takes it upon herself, but that is only to tease me; it was really this illiterate girl who has been fooling you, and you believed it all. There were none of your mediumistic phenomena last night, but this girl here (*pointing to Tanya*) has done it all.

PROFESSOR (*angrily*). What do you mean?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. I mean that it was she who played the guitar in the dark, and who struck my husband on the head, and who did all that foolishness. She has just confessed.

PROFESSOR (*smiling*). What does that prove?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. It proves that your mediumism is nonsense, that is what it proves!

PROFESSOR. Because this girl wanted to cheat, mediumism is nonsense, as you have deigned to express yourself? (*Smiling.*) A strange conclusion! It may well

be that this girl wanted to cheat: this often happens; and it may be that she really did do something; but what she did, she did, and that which was a manifestation of mediumistic energy was a manifestation of mediumistic energy. It is even very probable that that which this girl did, evoked, solicited, so to speak, the manifestation of mediumistic energy, and gave it definite form.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Another lecture!

PROFESSOR (*sternly*). You say, Anna Pávlovna, that this girl, and maybe this charming young lady, did something; but the light which we all saw, and in the first case the fall, and in the second the rise of the temperature, and Grossmann's agitation and vibration,—well, did the girl do that, too? But these are facts, facts, Anna Pávlovna! Anna Pávlovna, there are things which must be investigated and fully understood in order to speak of them,—things which are too serious, too serious—

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. And the child whom Márya Vasílevna saw plainly? I myself saw it. This girl could not do that!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. You think that you are clever? But I tell you you are a fool!

LEONÍD FÉDOROVICH. Well, I will go away—Aleksyáy Vladímirovich, come to my room. (*Goes into the cabinet.*)

PROFESSOR (*shrugging his shoulders, follows him*). Oh, how far removed from Europe we still are!

SCENE XXIII. Anna Pávlovna, three peasants, Fédor Iványch, Tánya, Betsy, Grigóri, Semén, and Yákov (*enter*).

ANNA PÁVLOVNA (*to retreating Leoníd Fédorovich*). They have cheated him like a fool, and he does not see anything. (*To Yakov.*) What do you want?

YÁKOV. For how many persons shall I set the table?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. For how many? Fédor Iványch,

take the silver away from him! Out with him! He is the cause of everything. This man will bring me to the grave. Yesterday he came very near starving my dog, which had done him no harm. He is not satisfied with that. Last night he took the infected peasants to the kitchen, and now they are here again. He is the cause of everything. Out with him, this very minute! Discharge him, discharge him! (*To Semén.*) If you ever dare to make a noise in my house again, I will teach you!

SECOND PEASANT. If he is not a good man, don't keep him! Discharge him, and that will be the end of it.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA (*listening to him, looks at the Third Peasant*). Look there! He has an eruption on his nose, an eruption! He is a sick man, a reservoir of infection! I told you yesterday not to let them in, and they are here again. Drive them out!

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Well, will you not order me to accept their money?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. The money? Take the money, but drive them out this very minute, particularly that sick man! He is all rotten!

THIRD PEASANT. In vain do you say this, motherkin, in vain! Let me say, ask my old woman and she will tell you that I am not rotten. I am like glass, let me say.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. He dares discuss it. Out with them, out with them! They want to spite me! No, I cannot stand it, I cannot! Send for Peter Petróvich. (*Runs out, sobbing. Yákov and Grigóri exeunt.*)

SCENE XXIV. The same, *without* Anna Pávlovna, Yákov, and Grigóri.

TÁNYA (*to Betsy*). My dear Lizavéta Leonídovna, what shall I do now?

BETSY. Nothing, nothing. Go with them to the village! I will arrange it all. (*Exit.*)

## SCENE XXV. Fédor Iványch, three peasants, Tánya, and Porter.

FIRST PEASANT. How is it, honourable man, about the reception of the sum?

SECOND PEASANT. Let us depart!

THIRD PEASANT (*pushes forward with the money*). If I had known this, I would never have undertaken it. This will dry me up worse than consumption.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH (*to Porter*). Take them to my room. I have an abacus there. There I will receive it. Go, go!

PORTER. Come, come!

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. Thank Tánya for it! If it had not been for her, you would not have the land now.

FIRST PEASANT. In rivalry, as she made the preposition, just so she advanced it into motion.

THIRD PEASANT. She has made men of us. What should we have done without it? The land is small, there is not room enough to drive out a cow, nay, let me say, not even a chick. Good-bye, clever girl! When you come to the village, you will eat honey with us.

SECOND PEASANT. When I get home, I will get ready for the wedding, and I will brew the beer. Be sure and come soon!

TÁNYA. I will, I will! (*Squeaking.*) Semén, isn't it nice? (*Peasants exeunt.*)

## SCENE XXVI. Fédor Iványch, Tánya, and Semén.

FÉDOR IVÁNYCH. God be with you! Remember this, Tánya! When you have your own house, I will come to be your guest. Will you receive me?

TÁNYA. My dear Fédor Iványch, I will receive you like a father! (*Embraces and kisses him.*)

*Curtain.*

THE KREUTZER SONATA

1889





# THE KREUTZER SONATA

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"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. v. 28).

"His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given" (Matt. xx. 10-11).

## I.

THIS was early in the spring. We had been travelling for two days. People who were going but a short distance kept coming in and going out of the car; but three persons travelled, like myself, from the starting-point of the train: a plain-looking, no longer young lady, with a drawn face, dressed in a semi-masculine overcoat and cap, and smoking cigarettes; her acquaintance, a talkative man of about forty, in fashionable new clothes; and another, an undersized gentleman, with jerky motions, who kept to himself. The latter was not old, but his curly hair was apparently prematurely gray, and his uncommonly sparkling eyes rapidly flitted from one object to another. He wore an old, tailor-made overcoat, with a curly lamb-fur collar, and a tall lamb-fur cap. Under his overcoat, whenever he unbuttoned it, could be seen the national sleeveless coat and embroidered shirt. The peculiarity of this gentleman consisted further in his now

and then emitting strange sounds which resembled a clearing of the throat or a jerky laugh.

This gentleman during the whole journey carefully avoided conversing and becoming acquainted with the passengers. To his neighbours' remarks he answered curtly, or he read, or smoked, looking out of the window, or, fetching some provisions out of his old bag, drank tea or ate a lunch.

I thought that his loneliness weighed upon him, and I tried several times to start a conversation with him, but every time when our eyes met, which was often, because we were sitting diagonally opposite each other, he turned away and picked up a book, or looked out of the window.

During a stop, in the evening of the second day, at a large station, this nervous gentleman got some hot water and brewed some tea for himself, while the gentleman in the fashionable new clothes,—a lawyer, as I learned later,—with his neighbour, the smoking lady in the semi-masculine overcoat, went to drink tea at the station.

During the absence of the gentleman and the lady, a few new persons entered our car; among them was a tall, cleanly shaven, wrinkled old man, apparently a merchant, in a fitchew-fur coat and a cloth cap with an immense visor. The merchant sat down opposite the lady's and the lawyer's places, and immediately entered into a conversation with a young man, evidently a merchant's clerk, who had also entered the car at this station.

I was sitting diagonally across from them, and, as the train was not moving, was able to catch bits of their conversation whenever there was no one passing between us. The merchant informed him at first that he was going to his estate, which was but one station away; then, as is always the case, they began to speak about prices and about trade, and about business in Moscow and at the Nízhni-Nóvgorod Fair. The clerk began to tell about the carousals of a certain rich merchant, whom they both

knew, at the fair, but the old man interrupted him, and himself told of past carousals at Kunávin, in which he had taken part. He was apparently proud of the part taken by him in them, and was telling with obvious joy how once he and this acquaintance of his were drunk in Kunávin and did something of such a nature that it was necessary to tell it in a whisper, whereat the clerk roared so that he could be heard through the whole car, and the old man laughed, displaying his yellow teeth.

As I did not expect to hear anything interesting, I got up to walk up and down the platform until the departure of the train. I met the lawyer and the lady in the door, who were with animation talking about something, while making for the car.

"You will have no time," the affable lawyer said to me. "The second bell will ring in a minute."

And so it was. I had not reached the end of the train when the bell rang out. When I returned, the animated conversation between the lady and the lawyer was still in progress. The old merchant sat silently opposite them, sternly looking in front of him, and now and then disapprovingly gnashing his teeth.

"Then she frankly informed her husband," the lawyer was saying, with a smile, just as I passed by him, "that she could not and would not live with him because —"

He continued to tell her the rest, but I could not make out what he was saying. After me, other passengers passed in; then the conductor; then a porter ran in, and there was a din for quite awhile, so that their conversation could not be heard. When all had quieted down, and I again heard the lawyer's voice, the conversation had evidently passed from the particular case to generalizations.

The lawyer was saying that the question of divorce now occupied public opinion in Europe, and that such cases were becoming ever more frequent in our country. Upon

noticing that he was the only person whose voice was heard, he interrupted his speech, and addressed himself to the old man. "Such things did not happen in olden times, did they?" he said, with a pleasant smile.

The old man wanted to make a reply, but just then the train started, and the old man took off his cap and began to make the sign of the cross and to whisper a prayer. The lawyer turned his eyes away and waited respectfully. Having finished his prayer and the three-fold sign of the cross, the old man pulled his cap down over his head, adjusted himself in his seat, and began to speak:

"It used to happen, sir, only not so often," he said. "It could not be different considering the times we are living in. People are too much educated nowadays."

The train moved faster and faster, rumbling over the rail ends, so that I could not hear them well. As I was interested in what they were saying, I seated myself nearer to them. My neighbour, the nervous gentleman with the sparkling eyes, was apparently interested himself: he listened attentively, without getting up.

"What makes education bad?" the lady said, with a scarcely perceptible smile. "Do you think it is better to marry as of old, when bridegroom and bride did not see each other?" she continued, replying, as is the habit with women, not to the words of her interlocutor, but to the words which she supposed he would utter.

"They did not know whether they loved each other or could love each other, and married by chance, and then suffered all their lives. In your opinion this is better?" she said, obviously directing her remarks to me and to the lawyer, and least of all to the old man, with whom she was speaking.

"People are too much educated," repeated the merchant, looking contemptuously at the lady and leaving her question unanswered.

"It would be desirable to know how you explain the

connection between education and marital incompatibility," the lawyer said, with a slight smile.

The merchant wanted to say something, but the lady interrupted him:

"No, that time has passed," she said. But the lawyer stopped her:

"Permit the gentleman to express his idea!"

"Foolishness comes from education," the old man said, with determination.

"They join in marriage those who do not love each other, and then they wonder why it is they do not live in peace," the lady hastened to say, looking at the lawyer and at me, and even at the clerk, who had raised himself in his seat and, leaning on the hand-rest, was listening to the conversation. "Only animals may be paired according to their master's will, but people have their inclinations and attachments," said the lady, evidently wishing to sting the merchant.

"Madam, you say this in vain," said the old man. "An animal is a beast, but law is given to man."

"But how can you want one to live with a person, when there is no love between them?" the lady still hastened to express her sentiments, which, no doubt, seemed very novel to her.

"In former days this was not considered," the old man said, in an impressive voice. "This has only come in lately. Let the least thing happen, and the wife says: 'I will leave you!' Even peasants have taken to it. 'Here,' she says, 'are your shirt and trousers, but I will go with Vánka, because his hair is more curly than yours.' Go and talk with them! Woman must, above everything else, have fear."

The clerk glanced at the lawyer, and at the lady, and at me, apparently holding back a smile, and ready to approve or ridicule the merchant's speech, according to the way it was accepted.



"What fear?" asked the lady.

"Namely, let her fear her husband! That's the fear I mean!"

"But, my friend, that time has passed," the lady said, almost with annoyance.

"No, madam, that time never can pass. Just as Eve was created from the rib of a man, so she will always remain, to the end of the world," said the old man, shaking his head so sternly and victoriously that the clerk at once decided that victory was on the side of the merchant, and so laughed out loud.

"You men judge like this," said the lady, looking at us, and not giving in. "You have taken liberty for yourselves, and you want to keep woman in her chamber, but you take all kinds of liberties yourselves."

"Nobody gives them such a permission. However, there will be no increase in the house through a man, whereas a woman is a weak vessel," the merchant continued, in an impressive voice. The impressiveness of the merchant's intonations obviously vanquished his hearers, and even the lady felt herself crushed, but she would not submit.

"Yes. But I think you will agree with me that woman is a human being and has feelings like a man. What is she to do if she does not love her husband?"

"If she does not love?" the merchant repeated, austere, moving his brows and lips. "Never mind, she will love him!" This unexpected argument gave special pleasure to the clerk, and he emitted a sound of approval.

"No, she will not," said the lady. "If there is no love, you can't force her to love."

"Well, and if the wife is false to her husband, what then?" said the lawyer.

"That is not supposed to happen," said the merchant, "and has to be watched."

"But if it does happen, then what? Such things do occur."

"Maybe these things happen elsewhere, only not with us," said the old man.

Everybody was silent. The clerk moved forward restlessly, and, apparently not wishing to be behind the others, smiled and said:

"Yes, there was once a scandal with a fellow of our set. It is pretty hard to make it out. His wife happened to be a loose woman, and off she went, gallivanting. He was a sober kind of a fellow, with great ability. At first it was with a clerk. Her husband tried to check her with kind treatment,—but she did not stop. She did all kinds of unseemly things, and began to steal his money. Then he beat her. Well? She got worse and worse. She began intrigues with an infidel Jew, excuse me for mentioning it. What could he do? He gave her up entirely. And so he lives single, and she walks the streets."

"Because he is a fool," said the old man. "If he had not given her the reins at first, but had checked her in, she would have been all right. You must not give them their liberty at first. Don't trust a horse in the field, nor a woman in the house!"

Just then the conductor came to ask for the tickets to the next station. The old man gave up his.

"Yes, you must check in the women at the start, or else all is lost."

"What about the jollification married men have at the Kunávin Fair, of which you were telling awhile ago?" I asked, having lost my patience.

"That is a different matter," said the merchant, and buried himself in silence.

When the whistle blew, the merchant got up, got his bag out from under the bench, wrapped himself in his coat, and, raising his cap, went out on the brake platform.

## II.

No sooner had the old man left than there arose a conversation in which several persons took part.

"He is a papa of the old style," said the clerk.

"A living Domostróy!"<sup>1</sup> said the lady. "What a savage conception about woman and about marriage!"

"Yes, we are very far from the European conception of marriage," said the lawyer.

"The main thing is, these people do not understand," said the lady, "that marriage without love is not a marriage, that love alone sanctifies love, and that real marriage is only such as is sanctified by love."

The clerk listened attentively, trying to memorize as much as possible of the clever remarks, to use them on occasion.

In the middle of the lady's speech, there was heard behind me the sound of what might have been an interrupted laugh or sob; and, upon looking around, we saw my neighbour, the gray-haired lonely gentleman with the sparkling eyes, who, unnoticed by any one, had come up to us, evidently interested in the conversation. He was standing, with his hands on the back of the seat, and was apparently very much agitated: his face was red and the muscle of his cheek was jerking.

"What kind of a love is it that sanctifies marriage?" he asked, hesitatingly.

Seeing the agitated condition of the questioner, the lady tried to answer him as gently and clearly as possible.

<sup>1</sup> A sixteenth century work in which rules of conduct are laid down.

"True love — If this love exists between a man and a woman, then marriage is possible," said the lady.

"Yes. But what do you mean by true love?" said the gentleman of the sparkling eyes, with an awkward smile, and with timidity.

"Everybody knows what love is," said the lady, evidently wishing to break off her conversation with him.

"But I do not," said the gentleman. "You must define what you understand —"

"What? It is very simple," said the lady, but she stopped to think. "Love — love is the exclusive preference of one person to all others," she said.

"Preference for how long? For a month, or two, or for half an hour?" muttered the gray-haired gentleman, laughing.

"Excuse me, but you are evidently not speaking of the same thing."

"Yes, I am."

"The lady says," interposed the lawyer, pointing to the lady, "that marriage must, in the first place, spring from attachment, — love, if you please, — and only if such is on hand does marriage represent something sacred, so to speak: then, that no marriage, without natural attachments — love, if you wish — at its base, carries any moral obligations with it. Do I understand you right?" he turned to the lady.

The lady with a nod of her head expressed her approval of the exposition of her idea.

"Besides —" the lawyer continued his speech, but the nervous gentleman, with eyes now aflame, not being able to repress himself any longer, did not allow the lawyer to finish it, and himself said:

"No, I have in mind that which you said about the preference of one to all the rest; but I ask: a preference for how long?"

"For how much time? For a long time, sometimes for a whole life," said the lady, shrugging her shoulders.

"But that happens only in novels, and never in real life. In real life this preference of one to others may last a few years, which it rarely does; more frequently for months, or weeks, days, and even hours," he said, being apparently conscious of puzzling all with this opinion of his, and satisfied with it.

"Oh, how can you say that? But no. No, excuse me," all three of us spoke at the same time. Even the clerk uttered a certain sound of disapproval.

"Yes, I know," the gray-haired gentleman tried to rise above our voices, "you are speaking of that which you assume as existing, whereas I speak of that which really is. Every man experiences that which you call love in the presence of any beautiful woman."

"Ah, what you say is terrible! But there certainly is among people that feeling which is called love, and which lasts for months and years, and even for a lifetime?"

"No, there is not! Even if we should grant that a man might prefer a certain woman for all his life, the woman, in all probability, would prefer another, and thus it has always been, and always will be," he said, and, drawing out his cigarette-holder, he lighted a cigarette.

"But there might be a mutual feeling," said the lawyer.

"No, that cannot be," he retorted, "just as it is impossible that any two marked peas out of a bag of peas should happen to lie together. Besides, it is not only a question of probability, but of certain satiety. To love one and the same person all your life amounts to saying that one candle will burn a lifetime," he said, taking a long puff at his cigarette.

"You are all speaking of carnal love. Do you not admit love based on oneness of ideals, on spiritual affinity?" said the lady.

"Spiritual affinity! Oneness of ideals!" he repeated,

emitting his peculiar sound. "In that case there is no reason for sleeping together (pardon my coarseness). As it is, people sleep together on account of oneness of ideals," he said, bursting into a nervous laugh.

"But pardon me," said the lawyer, "facts contradict your statement. We do see that marital relations exist, that all humankind, or the majority of it, live a conjugal life, and many persevere honestly in a protracted conjugal life."

The gray-haired gentleman laughed out once more.

"At first you say that marriage is based on love, and when I express a doubt in the existence of a love other than the sensual, you prove to me the existence of love in the fact that marriages exist. Yes, but marriages are mere deception in our days!"

"You will pardon me," said the lawyer, "all I said was that marriages have always existed."

"They have. But what makes them exist? They have existed with those people who in marriage see something mysterious, — a mystery which puts them under obligations in the sight of God, — there they have existed. With us, people marry, seeing in marriage nothing but cohabitation, and from this results either deception or violence. If it is a deception, it is easily borne. Husband and wife deceive others by making them believe that they are monogamous, whereas they are polygamous and polyandrous. This is bad, but it will pass; but when, as so very frequently happens, husband and wife have assumed the external obligation to live together all their lives, and they begin to hate each other from the second month on, and wish to separate, and still continue to live together, then there results that terrible hell which leads people to take to drink, to shoot, kill, and poison themselves and each other." He spoke ever more rapidly, without giving anybody a chance to interpose a word, and getting more and more excited. It was an awkward situation.



"Yes, no doubt there are critical episodes in marital life," said the lawyer, wishing to put an end to the indecently heated conversation.

"I see you have found out who I am," the gray-haired gentleman said, softly, and almost quietly.

"No, I have not the pleasure."

"It is not a great pleasure. I am Pózdnyshév, the man to whom that critical episode has happened, at which you have hinted, that episode which has led to his killing his wife," he said, casting a rapid glance upon us.

Nobody knew what to say, and all kept silent.

"Well, it makes no difference," he said, emitting his strange sound. "However, excuse me! I will not trouble you."

"Why, no, not at all," said the lawyer, himself not knowing what it was that was "not at all."

But Pózdnyshév paid no attention to him, rapidly turned around, and went back to his seat. The lawyer and the lady whispered together. I sat by Pózdnyshév's side and was silent, not being able to find anything to talk about. It was too dark to read, and so I closed my eyes and pretended that I wished to fall asleep. Thus we rode in silence to the next station.

At this station the lawyer and the lady went to another car, having first spoken about it to the conductor. The clerk settled himself on the bench and fell asleep. Pózdnyshév continued smoking all the time and drank the tea which he had prepared for himself at the previous station.

When I opened my eyes and looked at him, he suddenly turned to me with determination and irritation:

"Maybe it is not agreeable to you to be sitting with me, knowing who I am? In that case, I will go out."

"Oh, not at all!"

"Well, then won't you have a glass? It is rather strong."

He poured out a glass of tea for me.

"They are talking and lying —" he said.

"What are you referring to?" I asked.

"To the same thing: to that love of theirs, and to what they mean by it. Don't you want to sleep?"

"Not at all."

"Then, if you wish, I will tell you how this same love had led me to do what I did."

"If it will not be painful to you."

"No, it is painful for me to keep quiet. Drink the tea — or is it too strong?" The tea was really like beer, but I swallowed a glass. Just then the conductor entered. He silently followed him with angry eyes, and began to speak only after he had left.

### III.

“WELL, then I will tell you — But do you really want me to?”

I repeated that I wanted it very much. He was silent for a moment, rubbed his face with his hands, and began :

“If I am to tell it to you, I must begin from the beginning: I must tell you how I married and why, and the kind of man I was previous to my marriage.

“Before my marriage I lived like everybody else, that is, in our circle. I am a landed proprietor and a graduate of the university, and was a marshal of nobility. I lived before my marriage like the rest, that is, in debauchery, and, like all the people of our circle, I was convinced that, living in debauchery, I was living as was proper. I thought of myself that I was a nice fellow and entirely moral. I was not a seducer, had no unnatural tastes, did not make it the chief purpose of my life, as many of my contemporaries are doing, and abandoned myself to debauchery in a moderate and decent way, for health’s sake. I avoided all such women as by bearing a child or by attachment for me might tie my hands. However, there may have been children and attachments, but I acted as though they did not exist. And this I not only regarded as moral, but I even was proud of it — ”

He stopped, emitted his strange sound, as he always did whenever, apparently, a new thought struck him.

“Herein lies the main villainy,” he exclaimed. “Debauchery is not anything physical, — no physical excess is debauchery, — debauchery, real debauchery, lies in free-

ing oneself from the moral relations with a woman, with whom one enters into physical communion. It was this liberation on which I prided myself. I remember how I was once tormented when I was not able to pay a woman who, having evidently fallen in love with me, had abandoned herself to me, and how my conscience was appeased only when I sent her the money, by which I showed that I morally did not regard myself as in the least under any obligations to her. Don't shake your head as though you agreed with me," he suddenly called out to me. "I know all about that. All of you, and you, too, if by some rare chance you are not an exception, hold the same views which I once held. Well, never mind, pardon me," he continued, "but the main thing is, this is terrible, terrible, terrible!"

"What is terrible?" I asked.

"That abyss of delusions in which we live as regards women and our relations with them. Yes, I cannot speak of this calmly, not because this *episode*, as he called it, has happened to me, but because, when this episode happened to me, my eyes were opened; and I suddenly saw everything in an entirely different light, — everything topsyturvy, everything topsyturvy!"

He lighted a cigarette and, leaning on his knees, began to speak.

I could not see his face in the darkness of the car, but above the rumbling of the car I heard his impressive and pleasant voice.

#### IV.

"YES, only by having gone through all the torment, only thanks to this, did I comprehend where the root of it all was, did I comprehend what ought to be, and therefore did I see the terror of all that which is.

"So you see how and when all that began which led me up to my episode. It began when I was not quite sixteen years old. It happened when I was still in the gymnasium, while my elder brother was a first year student at the university. I did not yet know women, but, like all unfortunate children of our circle, I was no longer an innocent boy: I had been debauched by boys for two years: already woman, not any kind of a woman, but woman as a sweet being, woman, every woman, the nakedness of woman, had been tormenting me. My withdrawals were impure. I suffered as suffer ninety-nine hundredths of our boys. I was horrified, I was tormented, I prayed, and I fell. I was already debauched in imagination and in fact, but the last step had not yet been taken. I was perishing myself, but I had not yet laid hands on another human being. But my brother's comrade, a jolly student, a so-called good fellow, that is, the worst kind of a good-for-nothing, who had taught us to drink and play cards, persuaded me after a carousal to drive to that place. We went. My brother, too, was innocent still, and he fell that night. And I, a fifteen-year-old boy, desecrated myself and was instrumental in the desecration of a woman, without comprehending what I was doing. I had never heard from my elders that that which I was doing was bad. And even now they

do not hear it. It is true it is mentioned in the commandments, but the commandments are needed only to answer the priest properly at the examination; nor are they as necessary, anywhere near as necessary, as the commandment about the use of *ut* in conditional sentences.

"Thus, I had never heard it said by my elders, whose opinion I valued, that this was bad. On the contrary, I heard from people whom I respected that it was good. I heard that my struggles and my suffering would cease after it; I heard it and I read it; I heard my elders say that it was good for health; and I heard my companions say that it was meritorious and dashing. Thus, in general, I could foresee nothing but good in it. The danger of disease? Even that was foreseen. The paternal government takes care of that. It watches over the regular activity of the houses of prostitution, and makes debauchery for gymnasiasts safe. And the doctors watch over it, for a stated salary. So it ought to be. They affirm that debauchery is good for health, and they provide a well-regulated, accurate debauchery. I know some mothers who in this sense watch over the health of their sons. And science sends them into houses of prostitution."

"How does science send them there?" I asked.

"Who are the doctors? Priests of science. Who debauches the youths, insisting that this is necessary for their health? They.

"If one-hundredth part of the effort exerted on the cure of syphilis were utilized on the eradication of debauchery, there would long ago not have been a trace left of syphilis. Instead, all effort is exerted not on the eradication of debauchery, but on its encouragement, on securing the safety of debauchery. Well, that is another matter. The point is that to me, as to nine-tenths, if not more, of the men of all conditions of life, even among the peasants,



there happened that terrible thing that I fell, not because I became a prey to the natural seductions of a certain woman's charms,—no, not a woman had seduced me, but I fell because the people around me saw in the fall either a most lawful function which was very useful to health, or a most natural, and not only pardonable, but even innocent pastime for a young man.

"I did not understand that there was any fall; I simply began to abandon myself to those part pleasures, part necessities, which, so I had been impressed, were peculiar to a certain age, and I abandoned myself to this debauchery, as I had abandoned myself to drinking and smoking. And yet there was something especial and pathetic in this fall. I remember how even then, before I had left the room, I felt sad, so sad that I felt like weeping,—weeping for the loss of my innocence, for my past relation to woman, now for ever lost. Yes, the simple, natural relation to woman was now for ever lost. From that time there no longer was nor could be any pure relation with women. I became what is called a libertine.

"To be a libertine is a physical condition, resembling the condition of a morphine fiend, a drunkard, a smoker. Just as morphine-eaters, drunkards, smokers no longer are normal men, just so a man who has known several women is no longer a normal man, but will for ever be spoiled,—a libertine. Just as drunkards and morphine-eaters may at once be recognized by their faces and by their manner, just so is a libertine. A libertine may restrain himself and struggle, but the simple, pure, the fraternal relations with women will never again exist for him. A libertine may at once be told from the way he looks at a young woman and surveys her. And thus I became a libertine and remained one, and it was this which brought me to ruin."

## V.

“YES, that is so. Then it went farther, and farther, and there were all kinds of deviations. O God! I am horrified when I think of all my villainies. This is the way I think of myself, whom my companions ridiculed for my so-called innocence. But when you hear of the golden youths, of the officers, of the Parisians! And all these gentlemen, and I, whenever we, thirty-year-old debauchees, who have upon our souls hundreds of the most varied and terrible crimes in regard to women, when we, thirty-year-old debauchees, cleanly washed, shaven, perfumed, in clean linen, in evening dress or uniform, enter a drawing-room or appear at a ball, — we are emblems of purity, charming!

“Consider what it ought to be and what it is! It ought to be that if, in society, such a gentleman comes up to my sister or daughter, I, knowing his life, ought to walk over to him, to call him aside, and quietly to say to him: ‘Dear sir, I know the kind of a life you lead and with whom you pass your nights. This is not the place for you. Here are pure, innocent girls. Go away!’ Thus it ought to be; whereas, in reality, when such a gentleman makes his appearance and dances with my sister or daughter, and embraces her, we rejoice, if he happens to be rich and has influential connections. Maybe he will honour my daughter after Rigolboge! Even if traces of the disease are left, — that does not matter much, — nowadays they cure well. Really, I know several girls of high life who have with delight been

married off by their parents to men suffering from a well-known disease. Oh, oh, what abomination! The time will come when such abomination and lie shall be laid bare!"

He several times emitted his strange sounds, and took to drinking tea. The tea was dreadfully strong, — there was no water with which to weaken it. I felt that the two glasses which I had drunk had made me very nervous. The tea seemed to have affected him, too, for he became ever more agitated. His voice became more and more sonorous and expressive. He continually changed his position; he now took off his cap, and now put it on again, and his face assumed strange forms in the semidarkness in which we were sitting.

"Well, thus I lived to my thirtieth year, not giving up for a minute my intention of marrying and preparing for a most elevated and pure family life. For this purpose I looked around for a girl who would best answer to these requirements," he continued. "I besmirched myself in the mire of debauchery, and, at the same time, scrutinized girls to see who from her purity would be most worthy of me.

"I threw out many of them simply because they were not sufficiently pure for my purpose; finally I found one whom I considered worthy of me. She was one of two daughters of a former rich Pénza landed proprietor, who had lost his fortune.

"One evening, after we had had an outing in a boat, and in the night, when we returned home in the moonlight, and I was sitting near her and admiring her stately figure, which was well set off by a jersey, and her locks, I suddenly decided that it was she. It appeared to me on that evening that she understood everything, everything which I felt and thought, and that I felt and thought nothing but the most elevated things, whereas in reality it was only that her jersey and her locks were very

becoming to her, and that after a day passed near her I longed for a greater approximation to her.

"It is wonderful how complete the illusion is that beauty is identical with goodness. A beautiful woman says insipid things, but you hear only cleverness. She speaks and does unseemly things, and you see only charm. And when she says no insipidities and does nothing unseemly, you at once come to the conclusion that she is wonderfully clever and moral!

"I returned home in transport and decided that she was the acme of moral perfection, and that therefore she was worthy of being my wife, and so I proposed to her the very next day.

"What a chaos that is! Out of a thousand men who are marrying, not only in our circle, but, unfortunately, also among the masses, there is hardly one who has not been married, like Don Juan, ten, or a hundred, or even a thousand times before his wedding.

"It is true, I now hear of young men — and I have observed it to be so — who feel and know that it is not a joke, but a great deed.

"God help them! But in my days there was not one such in ten thousand. All know this, and yet they pretend not to know it. In all the novels we have detailed descriptions of the heroes, and of ponds and bushes, near which they walk; but, in describing their great love for some maiden, there is nothing said about what had taken place before with the interesting hero, — not a word of his frequenting certain houses, of chambermaids, cooks, and other people's wives. And if there are such indecent novels, they are never put into the hands of those who, above all others, ought to know it, into girls' hands.

"At first we pretend before these girls that the debauchery which fills one-half of our cities, and even of the villages, does not exist at all.

"Then we all get so used to this pretence that, like the

English, we begin sincerely to believe that we are all moral people and live in a moral world. These maidens — poor maidens — believe this quite in earnest. Even thus my wife believed it. I remember how once, while engaged to her, I showed her my diary, from which she could tell, even though only in a slight degree, what my past had been, but more especially what my last liaison had been. This she might have learned from others, and I, for some reason, felt the necessity of informing her of it. I remember her terror, despair, and confusion, when she learned this and comprehended it. I saw that she wanted to give me up. Why did she not?"

He emitted his sound, gulped down another swallow of tea, and kept silent.

## VI.

"No, after all, it is better this way, it is better!" he exclaimed. "It served me right! But this is another matter. I wanted to say that the only ones who are deceived are these unfortunate maidens.

"The mothers know it, especially the mothers who have been educated by their husbands know it well. Pretending to believe in the purity of men, they, in fact, act quite differently. They know with what line to catch men for themselves and for their daughters.

"We men do not know it, and we do not know it because we do not want to know it, but the women know very well that the most elevated, the poetical love, as we call it, depends not on moral qualities, but on physical nearness, and besides on the dressing of the hair, and the colour and cut of the dress. Ask an expert coquette, who has undertaken to entice a certain man, what she would prefer to risk: to be accused, in presence of him whom she is endeavouring to charm, of lying, cruelty, and even debauchery, or to appear before him in a badly made and homely dress, — and you will find that she will always prefer the first. She knows that we men are ranting about high sentiments, but that we mean only her body, and that we, therefore, will forgive her all her nastiness, but that we will not forgive an ugly, inartistic, tasteless costume.

"The coquette knows this consciously, and every innocent girl knows it unconsciously, just as animals know it.

"This accounts for those nasty jerseys, bustles, these bare shoulders, arms, and almost breasts. Women, espe-



cially those who have passed the male school, know full well that all the talk about elevated subjects is only talk, and that man wants only the body and all that which presents it in the most deceptive, but at the same time in the most enticing, light, — and it is this which actually is done. Cast aside this familiarity with all this unseemliness, which has become our second nature, and take a look at the life of our higher classes, just as it is, with all its shamelessness, and you will find that it is through and through nothing but a house of prostitution. You do not agree with me? Permit me to prove it to you,” he said, interrupting me. “You say that the women of our society have other interests than those in the houses of prostitution, but I say no, and I will prove it to you. If people differ in the aims of their lives, in the inner contents of their lives, this difference must necessarily be reflected in their externals, and their externals must be different. But look at those unfortunate and despised creatures, and at the ladies of higher society: you will find the same costumes, the same fashions, the same perfumes, the same baring of arms, shoulders, and breasts, and the same accentuation of the prominent bustle, — the same passion for stones and expensive baubles, the same entertainments, dances, music, and singing. As those use all means with which to entice men, so do these.

## VII.

“WELL, it was these jerseys, and locks, and bustles that caught me.

“It was easy to catch me because I had been brought up under those conditions which, as cucumbers are forced in a hothouse, force young men to fall in love. Our stimulating, superabundant food, united with complete physical inactivity, is nothing but a systematic incitement to lust. You may marvel at it, or not, but it is a fact. I myself did not notice it until very recently. But now I know it. And it is precisely this which vexes me: nobody knows it, but they all continue talking such nonsense as that which that lady has been talking.

“Yes, one spring, peasants had been working on a railroad embankment near my farm. The usual food of a peasant lad consists of bread, kvas, and onions, and with this he is alive, happy, and healthy; he performs light field labour. He comes to work on the railroad, and he receives his food allotment of porridge and a pound of meat, but he works off this meat on sixteen hours of work back of a wheelbarrow weighing more than a thousand pounds,—and this agrees with him. But we devour two pounds of meat, and venison, and fish, and all kinds of highly exciting eatables and drinks,—where does it all go to? To create sensual excesses. If it goes that way, and the safety-valve is open, all is well; but close up the valve, as I used to close it temporarily, and you at once get incitement, which, passing through the prism of our artificial life, will find its expression in an infatuation of

the clearest water, sometimes even in platonic love. And thus I fell in love, like the rest.

“Everything was in evidence: the transports, the tender moods, and the poetry. In reality this love of mine was the result, on the one hand, of the activity of her mamma and of the tailors, and, on the other, of a surplus of food swallowed by me, combined with an inactive life. If, on the one hand, there had been no rowing and no tailors with their finely made waists, etc., and my wife had worn an unsightly capote and remained at home, and if I, on the other, had been under normal conditions, a man devouring no more food than was necessary to do work, and my safety-valve had been open, — for the time being it happened to be closed, — I should not have fallen in love, and nothing would have happened.

## VIII.

“WELL, everything seemed to be favourable: my condition, the well-made garment, and the successful rowing. It had been a failure some twenty times, but this once everything went well, as happens with a trap. I am not laughing. Marriages are now arranged like traps. Is there anything natural about it? A girl is grown up,—she must be married. This seems so simple, when the girl is not a monster, and there are men who want to get married. Thus it was done in ancient times. When the girl became of the proper age, her parents arranged the match for her. Thus it was done, and still is done, with the whole human race: among the Chinese, the Hindoos, the Mohammedans, and among our lower classes; thus it is done with the whole human race, at least with ninety-nine hundredths of it. Only one hundredth, and even less, of us debauchees have discovered that this is not good, and something new has been concocted. What is this new thing? It is this: the girls sit, and the men, as at a fair, walk up and down, and make their selection. The girls sit and think, not daring to say it: ‘Darling, take me!—No, me!—Not her, but me; see what shoulders, etc., I have!’ But we men keep walking up and down, scrutinizing, and feeling quite satisfied. ‘I know, but I will not be caught.’ They walk about, and scrutinize, and are quite satisfied, seeing that it is all fixed that way to please them. If one is not on the lookout,—bang, and he is caught!”

“How would you have it otherwise?” I said. “Would you want a woman to propose?”

"I do not know what I want; only, if there is to be equality, let there be equality. If it has been discovered that match-making is degrading, this is a thousand times worse. There the rights and chances are equal, but here a woman is either a slave in the market, or a bait in a trap. Just try and tell a mother or the girl herself the truth that all that she is concerned in is to catch a husband, my God, what a storm you would raise! But this is all they are doing, and they have nothing else to do. What is terrible is to see at times extremely young, poor, innocent girls busy themselves with it. Then again, if it were done openly, but no, deception is practised. — 'Ah, the origin of species, how interesting that is! Ah, Lili is interested in painting! Shall you be at the exposition? How instructive! And sleigh-riding, and the theatre, and the symphony? Ah, how remarkable! My Lili goes into ecstasies over music. Why do you not share her convictions? And rowing?' — But the only thought which occupies them is: 'Take me, take me, my Lili! No, me! Well, just try!' — Oh, what an abomination, what a lie!" he concluded, and, finishing what there was left of the tea, he began to clear away the cups and the dishes.

## IX.

"Do you know," he began, putting the tea and sugar in a bag, "it is the domination of women from which the world suffers. All this comes from it.

"How do you mean the domination of women?" I said. "The rights, the privileges, are on the side of men."

"Precisely," he interrupted me. "It is exactly what I wanted to tell you. It explains that unusual phenomenon that, on the one hand, it is quite true that woman has been brought to the lowest degree of humiliation, while, on the other, she dominates. The women dominate in the same way that the Jews, with their monetary power, pay us back for their oppression. 'Ah, you want us to be traders only,—very well, we Jews will take possession of you,' say the Jews. 'Ah, you want us to be nothing but objects of sensuality,—very well, we, as objects of sensuality, will enslave you,' say the women. Woman is deprived of rights not because she cannot vote or be a judge,—there is no special privilege in being occupied with these affairs,—but because in sexual intercourse she is not man's equal, has not the right to use a man or abstain from him according to her wish, to select a man according to her wish, instead of being selected. You say this is abominable,—very well: then let men be deprived of the same rights. At the present time woman is deprived of the right which man enjoys. So, in order to avenge herself on him for this right, she acts on man's sensuality, through this sensuality subdues him so that he selects only formally, for in reality it is she who makes the selection. Having once possessed



herself of this means, she misuses it, and gains a terrible power over men."

"Wherein does this special power lie?" I asked.

"Where does it lie? Everywhere, in everything. Go through the shops in any large city! Millions of roubles' worth of goods are displayed here, — it is hard to estimate the labour expended on them, — and see whether in nine-tenths of these shops there is anything for the use of men. The whole luxury of life is demanded and supported by women.

"Count all the factories. An immense proportion of them make useless adornments, carriages, furniture, baubles for women. Millions of people, whole generations of slaves, perish in this forced labour of the factories, merely to satisfy this craving of the women. The women, like queens, keep in bondage and at hard labour nine-tenths of the human race. All this comes from having humiliated them and deprived them of equal rights with men. So they avenge themselves by acting on our sensuality, and by catching us in their nets. Yes, that is what it comes from.

"Women have made of themselves such a weapon of sensual incitement that a man is not able to treat a woman calmly. The moment a man walks over to a woman he comes under the influence of her poison, and becomes intoxicated. In former days I never felt at ease when I saw a woman all dressed up in her evening attire, but now I simply feel terribly, I cannot help seeing something dangerous for men and illicit, and I feel like calling a policeman and asking protection against a peril, and demanding that the dangerous object be taken away and removed.

"Yes, you laugh!" he cried to me, "but it is not at all a joke. I am sure that the time will come, and maybe very soon, when people will understand it and will wonder how society could exist where, in violation of the

social peace, such deeds could be permitted as are the wearing of those bodily ornaments which directly provoke sensuality, and which society tolerates in the case of women. Is not this the same as putting traps on all walks and paths? No, it is worse! Why is gambling forbidden, and why are women permitted to appear in garbs which provoke sensuality? They are a thousand times more dangerous.

## X.

“WELL, I was caught in this manner. I was what we call in love. I not only imagined her to be the acme of perfection, but during all the time of my engagement to her I considered myself to be the acme of perfection. There is no rascal so great that, upon instituting a search, he could not find some rascals who in some respects stand lower than he himself, and could not, therefore, find a cause for being proud and satisfied with himself. Even thus it was with me: I did not marry for money, — calculation was absent in my case, whereas the majority of my acquaintances married for money or connections, — I was rich, she poor. This was one thing. The other thing of which I was proud was that, while others married with the intention of continuing to live in the same state of polygamy as before their marriage, I had the firm intention of remaining monogamous after marriage, and there was no limit to my pride on that score. Yes, I was a terrible swine, and I imagined that I was an angel.

“The time of my engagement did not last long. I cannot think of this time without shame. What an abomination! Love is supposed to be spiritual and not sensual. Well, if love is of a spiritual nature and consists in spiritual communion, then this spiritual communion ought to find its expression in words and conversation. There was nothing of the kind. It was very hard for us to speak together when we were left alone. It was the labour of a Sisyphus. No sooner had I thought of something and said it than I had to become silent and think of the next thing to say. There was nothing to talk

about. Everything that could be said about the life which was in store for us, about arrangements and plans, had been said, — and what next? If we had been animals we would have known that there is no need of talking; here, on the contrary, we had to talk, but there was nothing to talk about, because we were not interested in that which could be gleaned from our conversations. Then there was that ugly habit of eating candy, that coarse gormandizing on sweets, and all those abominable preparations for the wedding: the talks about the apartments, the sleeping-room, the beds, the capotes, the morning-gowns, the linen, the toilets — You must consider that if people marry according to the injunctions of the Domostróy, as the old man remarked, then the feather beds, the dowry, the beds, — all these are only details corresponding to the mystery. But with us, where of every ten people thinking of matrimony nine certainly do not believe in any mystery, and do not believe even that that which they do puts them under any obligations, when there is hardly one out of a hundred men who has not been married before, and of fifty hardly one who does not prepare himself in advance to be false to his wife on any convenient occasion, when the majority look upon the church ceremony as only a special condition for getting possession of a certain woman, — think what terrible meaning all these details have under these conditions. It turns out that the whole question lies only in this: it turns out to be a kind of sale. An innocent girl is sold to a libertine, and this sale is surrounded with certain formalities.

## XI.

"THUS all marry, and thus I married, and the much-praised honeymoon began. What a despicable name!" he hissed in anger. "I once took in all kinds of shows in Paris, and, being attracted by a sign, I went in to see a bearded woman and a water dog. It turned out that it was nothing but a man in a décolleté dress and in female attire, and the dog was covered with a sealskin and swam around in a tub of water. There was nothing of interest there; but as I went out the showman politely saw me out, and, turning to the crowd at the door, he pointed to me and said: 'You ask this gentleman whether it is worth seeing. Come in, come in, one franc a person!' I felt ashamed to say that I had been taken in, and the showman evidently counted on that. Thus, no doubt, it is with those who have experienced all the abomination of the honeymoon and do not wish to disenchant others. Neither did I disenchant any one, but now I see no reason for concealing the truth. I even regard it as my duty to tell the truth about it. It is awkward, shameful, abominable, wretched, and, above everything else, dull, inexpressibly dull! It was something like when I first learned to smoke, when I felt like vomiting and the spittle was abundant, and I swallowed it, and pretended to be happy. The enjoyment from smoking, even as from this, if it is to be at all, will be later: it is necessary for the husband to cultivate this vice in his wife, in order to derive pleasure from it."

"You call it a vice?" I said. "You are speaking of the most natural human quality."

"Natural?" he said. "Natural? No, I will tell you, on the contrary, that I have come to the conclusion that it is not natural. Yes, entirely unnatural. Ask a child, ask an uncorrupted girl!

"You say natural!

"It is natural to eat. It is a pleasure and a joy to eat, and comes easy and causes no shame from the very start; but in this case it is abominable, shameful, and painful. No, it is unnatural! And I have convinced myself that uncorrupted girls always hate it."

"But how," said I, "how would the human race be continued?"

"Yes, what is to be done in order that the human race may not perish!" he said, with malicious irony, as though expecting this familiar and unscrupulous retort. "Preach continence from childbirth in order that English lords may always be able to gormandize, that is all right. Preach continence from childbirth in order to derive as much pleasure as possible, that is all right. But only mention continence from childbirth in the name of morality, — Lord, what a cry is raised! The human race might come to an end because they want to stop being swine! However, excuse me, this light annoys me, — may I shade it?" he said, pointing to the lamp. I told him that it made no difference to me, and then he rose in his seat hurriedly, just as he did everything, and drew the cloth shade over the lamp.

"Still," I said, "if you considered this to be a law, the human race would soon stop."

He did not answer at once.

"You ask me how the human race will be continued?" he said, again taking a place opposite me, spreading his legs wide, and resting his elbows low upon them. "Why should it be continued?" he said.

"Why? Else we should not be here."

"Why should we?"



“Why? In order to live.”

“Why should we live? If there is no aim, if life is given us for life’s sake, there is no reason for living. And if it is so, then Schopenhauer and Hartmann, and all the Buddhists are quite right. Well, if there is an aim in life, it is evident that life must cease when that aim is reached. That is what it comes to,” he said, with agitation, apparently very proud of his idea. “That is what it comes to. You must notice that if the aim of humanity is goodness, — love, if you wish, — if the aim of humanity is that which is mentioned in the prophecies, when all people will unite together in love, and the spears will be forged into sickles, and so forth, then what is in the way of the accomplishment of this aim? — The passions. Of all the passions, the sexual, carnal love is the strongest, the most evil and stubborn; therefore, if all the passions are to be destroyed, this latter, the strongest of them all, carnal love, will also be destroyed, and the prophecy will be fulfilled, people will be united, the aim of humanity will be reached, and there will be no reason for it to exist. As long as the human race exists, the ideal is before it, and, of course, not the ideal of rabbits and swine, which is to breed as fast as possible, and not of monkeys and Parisians, to use in the most refined manner the enjoyments of sexual passion, but the ideal of goodness, which is reached through continence and purity. People have always striven for this. And see what comes of it!

“It turns out that carnal love is a safety-valve. If the present, living generation of the human race has not reached its aim, it has not reached it because it has passions, and the strongest of them is the sexual passion. As long as there is sexual passion there is a new generation, consequently there is a possibility for the next generation to reach the aim. If this one does not reach it, the next may, and so it goes on until it will be at-

tained, and the prophecy will be fulfilled, and people will be united.

“See what would have happened otherwise! If we are to admit that God has created men in order to attain a certain aim, he would have made them mortal, but without sexual passion, or immortal. If they were mortal but without sexual passion, what would happen? They would live and die without reaching that aim, and so God would have to create new men. But if they were immortal, then let us suppose (although it would be harder for them than for new generations to correct mistakes and approach perfection),—then let us suppose that they would reach their aim after many thousand years. What would they then be for? Where are they to be put then? And so it is better as it is. But it may be that this form of expression does not please you, and you are an evolutionist. Even then it will come to the same. The highest race of animals, the human, to be able to maintain itself in its struggle with other animals, must unite compactly, like a swarm of bees, and not breed endlessly; it must, like the bees, bring up sexless individuals, that is, it again must strive for continence, and not for the incitement of lust, toward which our whole structure of life is directed.” He grew silent. “The human race will cease? But is there any one who will doubt this, whatever his way of looking upon the world may be? This is as certain as death. According to all the teachings of the church there will come an end of the world, and the same is inevitable by all the teachings of science.

## XII.

“IN our world the very opposite takes place: if a man thought of continence while unmarried, he considers such continence unnecessary the moment he has married. These solitary journeys after the wedding, which the young people take with their parents’ consent, what are they but a license to commit debauchery? But a moral law, being violated, demands its own punishment.

“No matter how much I tried to arrange the honeymoon for myself, nothing came of it. All the time I only felt an abomination, shame, and dulness. Very soon a painful and oppressive feeling was added to this. It began very soon. I believe on the third or fourth day I found my wife in a dull mood; I began to ask her what the matter was, and embraced her, which, in my opinion, was all she could wish, but she pushed my arm aside and burst out weeping. What about? She could not say. She simply felt sad and oppressed. In all probability her tired nerves told her the truth of the abomination of our relations, but she could not say so. I began to inquire: she said something about being lonely without her mother. It appeared to me that this was not true. I began to speak persuasively to her, without mentioning her mother. I did not understand that she simply was oppressed and that her mother was only an excuse. But she soon felt offended because I did not mention her mother, as though I did not believe her. She told me that she was sure I did not love her. I accused her of caprice, and suddenly her face was completely changed: instead of sadness there was now an expression of irritation, and with the most

venomous words she began to upbraid me for my egotism and cruelty.

"I looked at her. Her countenance expressed complete coldness and hostility, almost hatred of me. I remember how frightened I was when I saw this. 'What is this?' I thought. 'Love is the union of souls, and this has come in place of it! This cannot be, that is not she!' I tried to appease her, but I ran up against such an insuperable wall of coldness and venomous hostility that before I had time to look around, the irritation took possession of me, too, and we told each other a mass of unpleasant things. The impression of this first quarrel was terrible. I called it a quarrel, but it was not a quarrel; it was a manifestation of the abyss which was in reality between us. The infatuation was exhausted by the gratification of sensuality, and we were left in our real relations to each other, that is, two mutually strange egotists, who wished to derive as much pleasure from each other as was possible. I called that a quarrel which had taken place between us; it was not a quarrel,—it was only the result of an interrupted sensuality which laid bare our real relations to each other. I did not understand that this cold and hostile attitude was our normal relation; I did not understand it because the hostile relation was in the beginning soon veiled from us by a new access of fleeting sensuality, that is, by infatuation.

"I thought that we had quarreled and made up, and that it would never happen again. But even during this same honeymoon there again was reached a period of satiety, again we ceased to be useful to each other, and another quarrel took place. The second quarrel impressed me even more than the first. 'It appears that the first quarrel was not an accident, but that it must be so and always will be so,' I thought.

"The second quarrel struck me the more forcibly because it had its rise in an absolutely impossible cause,

something about money, which I never grudged, and certainly not to my wife. All I remember is that she gave such a twist to a remark of mine that it turned out to be an expression of my desire to rule over her by means of money, to which, according to her words, I had affirmed my own exclusive right, — at all events, it was something impossible, stupid, mean, and unnatural, of no consequence either to her or to me. I grew irritated, began to upbraid her for her want of delicacy, she did the same, and off it started again. In her words, in the expression of her countenance and her eyes, I saw the same cruel, cold animosity, which had struck me so before. I remember I had quarreled with my brother, my friend, my father, but there had never been between us that venomous malice which arose in this case.

“Some time passed, and this mutual hatred was again veiled under the infatuation, that is, under sensuality, and I consoled myself with the thought that these two quarrels were mistakes that could be mended. But soon there came a third and a fourth quarrel, and I understood that it was not an accident, but that it must be so, that it would be so, and I was horrified at that which awaited me. I was, besides, tormented by the terrible thought that it was I alone who was living with my wife so badly and contrary to all expectation, whereas this does not happen in other cases of matrimony. I did not know then that it was a common fate, and that every one thought, like myself, that it was his exclusive misfortune, that he concealed this exclusive and disgraceful misfortune, not only from everybody else but even from himself, without acknowledging it to himself.

“It had begun in the very first days and it continued all the time, and it grew ever stronger and more pointed. In the depth of my heart I felt from the start that I was lost, that there had happened that which I had not expected, that marriage was not only no happiness, but even

something very oppressive ; however, like all the rest, I did not wish to acknowledge the fact to myself (I would not have acknowledged it even now were it not for the end), and I concealed it not only from others, but even from myself. Now I wonder how it was that I did not see my real situation. It might have been seen from the very fact that the quarrels began from such causes that later, when they were over, it was difficult to recall what had caused them. Reason had no time to *simulate* sufficient causes for the constant animosity which subsisted between us. Still more striking was the insufficiency of excuses for making up again. At times there were words, explanations, even tears, but often — Oh, it is horrible to think of it — after the bitterest words uttered toward each other, suddenly there were silent glances, smiles, kisses, embraces — Fie, what abomination ! How could I have missed seeing then all the vileness of it ? ”



### XIII.

Two passengers entered and seated themselves on a distant bench. He kept silent while they were seating themselves, but as soon as they quieted down he proceeded, apparently not losing the thread of his thoughts for a minute even.

"The vilest thing about it is," he began, "that in theory love is something ideal, elevated, whereas in practice it is abominable, swinish, a thing of which it is abominable and a shame to think and speak. Nature has purposely made it abominable and shameful. And if it is an abomination and a shame, it ought to be understood as such, whereas people, on the contrary, pretend that this abomination and shame is beautiful and elevated. What were the first signs of my love? They were these: I abandoned myself to animal excesses, not only feeling no shame, but somehow priding myself on the possibility of these physical excesses, paying not the least attention to her spiritual, nay, not even to her physical, life. I was bewildered to discover whence our animosity to each other came, but it was quite simple: this animosity was nothing but a protest of human nature against the animal which oppressed it.

"I marvelled at our mutual enmity. How could it have been otherwise? This hatred was nothing but the hatred which is common to participators in a crime, both for the incitement to the crime, and for the part taken in it. What else was it but a crime, when she, poor woman, became pregnant in the first month, and our swinish union still continued? You think that I am deviating

from my story? Not in the least! I am telling you *how* I killed my wife. In the court they asked me how and with what I killed my wife. The fools thought that I killed her with a knife on the 5th of October. I did not kill her then, but much earlier. Just as they now continue to kill them, all of them, all — ”

“ With what ? ”

“ This is the remarkable thing : nobody wants to know that which is so clear and evident ; that which doctors ought to know and preach, but about which they keep silent. The thing is dreadfully simple. Men and women are created like animals, and after sexual love begins pregnancy, then lactation, — that is, conditions under which carnal love is injurious both to the woman and to her child. There are an equal number of men and women. What follows from this ? It seems to be clear, and it does not take much wisdom to draw from it the same conclusion that animals draw, namely, continence. But no. Science has gone so far as to discover certain leucocytes that race about in the blood, and all kinds of useless foolishness, but it has not been able to grasp this matter. At least, one does not hear science speaking of it.

“ Thus there are but two ways out for woman : one is to make a monster of herself and destroy once and for all, or every time when the necessity arises, the possibility of being a woman, that is, a mother, in order that man may quietly and constantly enjoy himself ; the other way out, — it is not even a way out, but merely a simple, coarse, direct violation of the laws of Nature, which is committed in all so-called decent families, and which is, that woman, in opposition to her nature, must at the same time be pregnant, and nurse a child, and be a mistress, — that is, that she must be that to which not one animal would descend. Strength does not hold out. Therefore, we have hysterics and nerves, and, among the lower masses,

epilepsy. You will notice that pure girls have no epilepsy, but only women, that is, women living with their husbands. Thus it is in our country. The same is true of Europe in general. All the hospitals of hystericals are full of women who violate the laws of Nature. The epileptics and Charcot's patients are the complete wrecks, whereas the world is full of half-maimed women. Just think what a great work is going on in woman when she has conceived or when she nurses the newly-born child! There is growing up that which continues us and takes our place! And this sacred work is violated, — by what? — it is terrible to think of it! And they prate about the liberty and the rights of woman. It is as though cannibals were fattening captives for their feast, and, at the same time, assuring us that they are considerate about their rights and their freedom."

All this was entirely new to me and startled me.

"Well, if it is so," I said, "it turns out that one may love his wife about twice in a year, and a man —"

"A man must!" he interrupted me. "Again the dear priests of science have so assured us. Impress a man with the idea that he needs whiskey, tobacco, opium, and all this becomes necessary to him. It appears that God did not comprehend what was necessary, and since He did not consult with the wizards, He made blunders. You will see that this is not reasonable. They have decided that man must of necessity gratify his lust, but childbirth and lactation, which interfere with the gratification of this necessity, are in the way. What is to be done? Turn to the wizards, and they will fix it up. And they have done so! Oh, when will these wizards with their deceptions be dethroned? It is high time! What have we come to? People lose their minds and commit suicide, — all from this cause. How could it be otherwise? Animals seem to understand that their progeny continues their race, and they adhere to certain laws in

this respect. Only man does not know it, nor wants to know it. He is concerned only about getting the greatest possible enjoyment. And who is doing that? The king of Nature,—man! You will notice that animals come together only when they can ensure a progeny, whereas the accursed king of Nature is always at it, provided he can derive pleasure from it. More than that: he extols this simian occupation into a pearl of creation, into love. And in the name of this love,—that is, of abomination, he destroys—what?—one-half of the human race. Of all the women, who ought to be the helpmates in humanity's progress toward truth and goodness, he, in the name of his pleasure, makes not helpmates, but enemies. See, who is it that everywhere impedes the onward march of humanity? Women. Why are they such? For the reason which I have mentioned. Yes, sir, yes, sir," he repeated several times and began to move about, to take out his cigarettes, and to smoke, apparently wishing to calm himself.

#### XIV.

"I LIVED like just such a swine," he continued, in his former tone of voice. "The worst of it was that, living this bad life, I imagined that, because I was not attracted to other women, because I was living an honest domestic life, I was a moral man, and that I was not guilty of anything, but that our quarrels were due to her, her character.

"Of course, it was not she alone who was at fault. She was such as all, or as the majority are. She had been educated as the position of woman in our society demands, and as are brought up all the women, without exception, of our privileged classes, and as they of necessity must be brought up. They are prating of a new education for women. Empty words: the education of woman is just what it ought to be considering the existing unfeigned, true, general view held in regard to woman.

"The education of woman will always correspond to man's view of her. We all know what men think of them: '*Wein, Weib, und Gesang*,' and poets say so in verse. Take all poetry, all painting and sculpture, beginning with amatory poems and naked Venuses and Phrynes, and you will see that woman is an instrument of enjoyment; so she is on the Trubá and on the Grachévka,<sup>1</sup> and at the most refined ball. Take note of the devil's cunning: all right, let it be enjoyment and pleasure, let it, then, be known that it is enjoyment, and that woman is a dainty morsel. No, at first the knights assure us that they will worship woman (that they will, but they

<sup>1</sup> Streets in Moscow.

will not cease looking upon her as an instrument of enjoyment). Now they assure us that they respect woman. Some give their seats to them, and pick up their handkerchiefs; others acknowledge their right to occupy certain positions, to take part in the government, and so on. This they do, but the view remains the same: she is an instrument of enjoyment; her body is a means for enjoyment. And she knows it. It is just the same as with slavery.

"Slavery is nothing but the enjoyment of the forced labour of others. Consequently, in order that there should be no slavery, it would be necessary for men not to wish to make use of the forced labour of others, that they should regard this as sinful and disgraceful, whereas, in reality, they change the external form of slavery and imagine and assure themselves that there is no longer any slavery, and they do not see and do not wish to see that slavery still exists, because people still continue to love and consider good and just the enjoyment of the labours of others. As long as they regard this as good, there will always be found men who are stronger and more cunning than the rest and who will be able to accomplish it.

"Precisely the same is the case with the emancipation of woman. The enslavement of woman consists in men's desire to make use of her as an instrument of enjoyment, and in their considering this to be right. So they go and free woman, and give her all kinds of equal rights with man, but continue to look upon her as an instrument of enjoyment, and to educate her accordingly, in childhood, and in public opinion. And she remains the same humiliated and debauched slave, and man is the same debauched slave-owner.

"They free woman in the colleges and in courts, but still look upon her as an instrument of enjoyment. Teach her, as she is taught with us, to look upon herself in



this manner, and she will always remain a lower being. Either, with the aid of scoundrel doctors, she will prevent conception, that is, she will be a complete prostitute, who has descended, not to the lowest animal, but to the level of a thing, or she will be what she is in the majority of cases, diseased in mind, hysterical, unhappy, without any possibility for spiritual growth.

"The gymnasias and the colleges cannot change this. This can be changed only by a changed view held by men in regard to women, and by women in regard to themselves. This will come about only when women will regard as their highest state the condition of virginity, and not, as now, look upon this highest condition of man as a shame and disgrace. As long as this does not exist, the ideal of every girl, whatever her education may be, will be to attract to herself as many men, as many males as possible, in order to have a chance to select.

"But the fact that one knows a lot of mathematics and that another can play on the harp, will not change it. A woman is happy and obtains everything she may wish for, if she fascinates a man. And thus a woman's chief problem becomes the ability to fascinate. Thus it has been, and thus it will be. Thus it is in the life of a girl of our society, and thus it remains after marriage. In the maiden state she needs it for selection, in her matrimonial state — in order to rule over her husband.

"There is but one thing which cuts it short, or at least for a time suppresses it, and that is children, provided the woman is not a monster and herself nurses them. But here the doctors come in.

"My wife, who wanted herself to suckle and did suckle the last four children, was not in good health when the first baby was born. These doctors, who cynically undressed and felt her all over, for which I had to thank them and pay them money, — these charming doctors found that she must not herself nurse, and she was, dur-

ing this first time, deprived of the only means which would have saved her from coquetry. The baby was brought up by a wet-nurse, that is, we made use of the poverty, want, and ignorance of a woman, enticed her away from her own child to ours, and for this put on her a nurse's headgear with galloons. But this is another matter. The trouble was that during her period of freedom from pregnancy and lactation her former dormant feminine coquetry returned to her. And in me there appeared with unusual force the corresponding torment of jealousy, which never ceased torturing me during the whole time of my married life, just as all husbands are tortured who live with their wives as I did, that is immorally.

## XV.

"DURING all the time of my married life I never stopped experiencing pangs of jealousy. But there were certain periods when I suffered more than usual from it. One such period was when, after the first babe, the doctors forbade her to nurse it. I was especially jealous during that time, in the first place, because my wife was experiencing that unrest, peculiar to mothers, which produces a causeless violation of the regular order of life; and, in the second, because, seeing how easily she rejected the moral obligation of mothers, I justly, though unconsciously, concluded that it would be just as easy for her to violate her marital life, the more so since she was quite well and, in spite of the prohibition of the charming doctors, later nursed her own children, and brought up healthy children."

"I see you do not like doctors," I said, noticing an especially malignant expression of his voice every time he mentioned them.

"It is not a question of likes and dislikes. They have ruined my life, as they have ruined the lives of thousands, of hundreds of thousands, without my being able to connect the consequences with the cause. I understand that they want to make money, just like the lawyers and others, and I should gladly have given up to them half of my income, and everybody else, understanding what they are doing, would gladly give up to them half of their possessions, if they only would not interfere with your domestic life, and never came up close to you. I have not been collecting information, but I know dozens of

cases — there are plenty of them — where they have killed either the child in the mother's womb, averring that the mother could not bring forth the child, although later the mother has borne children without difficulty, or have killed the mothers, under the pretext of some operation. Nobody counts these murders, just as they did not count the murders of the Inquisition, because they were supposed to be for the good of humanity. It is impossible to count all the crimes which are committed by them. But all these crimes are nothing in comparison with that moral materialistic decadence which they introduce into the world, especially through the women.

"I shall leave out of account the fact that, if one were to follow their instructions, people would have to tend, on account of ever present infections in everything and everywhere, not to union but to disunion; according to their injunctions, people ought to sit in solitude, without letting an atomizer with carbolic acid out of their mouths (however, they have discovered that even this is of no avail). But this is nothing. The chief poison lies in the corruption of men, especially of women.

"Nowadays one must not say: 'You are not living well, you must live better.' One can't say that to himself, nor to any one else. And if you are living badly, the cause of it is the abnormality of the nerve functions, or something of the kind. And you have to go to them, and they will prescribe thirty-five kopeks' worth of medicine from the apothecary's, and you have to take it!

"You will grow worse, then take more medicine, and go again to the doctor. It is very clever!

"But that is another matter. I only wish to say that she had not the slightest difficulty in nursing her children, and that this pregnancy and nursing alone saved me from the torments of jealousy. If it had not been for this, it would all have happened before. The children

saved me and her. In eight years she bore five children, and she nursed them all but the first herself."

"Where are your children now?" I asked.

"The children?" he repeated the question, with an expression of terror.

"Excuse me, maybe this is too painful for you?"

"No, not at all. My wife's sister and her brother have taken them. They did not give them to me. I have given them my estate, but they did not give them up to me. I am something like a lunatic according to them. I am now leaving them. I saw them, but they will not let me have them, because I should educate them to be different from their parents, whereas it is necessary for them to be like them. Well, what is to be done? Of course they will not let me have them, and they will not trust me. Besides, I do not know whether I should have strength enough to bring them up. I think not. I am a ruin, a cripple. There is just one thing in me—I know. Yes, this much is certain: I know that which others will not know so soon.

"Yes, the children are alive and growing up to be just such savages as all around them are. I have seen them, I have seen them three times. I can do nothing for them, nothing. I am now travelling south, to my home: I have a cottage and garden there.

"Yes, it will be a long time before people will find out that which I know. It is easy enough to find out how much iron and what metals there are in the sun and stars; but it is hard, dreadfully hard, to comprehend that which casts any aspersions on our swinishness!

"I am thankful to you for being willing to listen to me.

## XVI.

“You mentioned my children. What a lot of lying they do about children! Children are God’s blessing, children are a joy. This is nothing but a lie. That used to be so, but now there is no semblance of it. Children are a bother, and nothing else. The majority of mothers feel it outright, and incidentally allow themselves to say so. Ask the majority of mothers of our circle, well-to-do people, and they will tell you that out of fear that their children might get ill and die, they do not wish to have any children, and do not wish to nurse them after they are born, in order not to become attached to them and not to suffer. The pleasure which the child affords them by its charm, — by those little hands and feet, and by the whole body, — the pleasure afforded by the child is less than the suffering which they experience, — let alone from disease or loss of the child, — from the mere fear of possible sickness or death. Weighing both the advantages and disadvantages, it appears that it is disadvantageous and, consequently, undesirable to have children. They say this frankly and boldly, imagining that these sentiments arise from their love for children, a good and praiseworthy feeling, of which they are proud. They do not notice that by this reflection they directly refute love, and only confirm their egotism. They derive less pleasure from the charm of a child than suffering caused by anxiety, and so that child, which they might love, is not wanted. They do not sacrifice themselves for the beloved creature, but for their own sakes they sacrifice the creature who might be loved.



"It is evident that this is not love, but egotism. But not a hand is raised to condemn them, the mothers of well-to-do families, for this egotism, when you consider what it is they suffer for the sake of their children's health, thanks again to the rôle these doctors play in our upper classes. It makes me shudder even now when I recall the life and the condition of my wife during those first years, when there were three or four children, and she was all absorbed in them. We led no life at all. It was an eternal danger, an escaping from it, a new impending danger, new desperate efforts, and a new salvation,—eternally the same condition as on a sinking ship. At times I thought that it was done on purpose, that she only pretended to be so anxious about the children, in order to vanquish me. It solved so enticingly and simply all the questions in her favour. It seemed to me at times that everything she said and did in such cases was done on purpose. But no, she really was all the time in terrible agony and pain about the children, their health and sicknesses. It was a trial for her and for me, too. Nor could she help suffering. Her attachment for her children, the animal necessity of feeding, fostering, defending them, was such as it is in the majority of women, but there was not that which animals have,—an absence of imagination and reason.

"A hen is not afraid of what might happen with her chick, does not know all the diseases which might befall it, does not know all the means with which people imagine they can save from disease and death. The young ones are no torment for the hen. She does for her chicks what is natural and pleasurable for her to do,—her young ones are a joy to her. When a chick becomes ill, her cares are quite definite: she warms and feeds it. Doing this, she knows that she is doing all that is necessary. If the chick dies, she does not ask herself why it has died, whither it has gone; she cackles for awhile, then stops

and continues to live as of old. But for our unfortunate women this is not the case, and it was not for my wife. Let alone the diseases, how to cure them, she heard on all sides and read endlessly varied and eternally changed rules about how to rear and educate the children: to feed them with this and that, and in such a way, — no, not with this and that, and in such a way, but like this; to dress, give them drink, bathe, put them to bed, give them outings, air, — in regard to all these things we, but more especially she, learned new rules every week. It looked as though it was but yesterday that women had begun to bear children. And if a child was not fed so or so, not properly bathed and not in time, and it grew ill, — then the conclusion was that we were at fault, that we had not done right by it.

“There was enough trouble as long as they kept well; but let them get ill, and then, of course, it was a real hell. It is supposed that a disease can be cured and that there is a science about it, and people, the doctors, who know how to cure. Not all, but the very best know how. So the child is ill, and you must strike him, that best doctor, who can save, and the child will be saved; or if you do not get him, or you do not live in the place where that doctor lives, the child will perish. This is not her exclusive belief, but the belief of all the women of her circle, and she hears it on all sides: Ekaterína Seménovna has lost two, because she did not call Iván Zakhárych in time. Iván Zakhárych has saved Márya Ivánovna's elder daughter; at the Petróvs', they, by the doctor's advice, scattered to various hotels, and they survived; — they did not scatter, and the children died; such and such a one had a weak child, and they went to the south, by the doctor's advice, and saved the child. How can she help worrying and suffering all her life when the lives of her children, to whom she is animally attached, depend upon her finding out in time what Iván Zakhárych may say

about it? But what Iván Zakhárych will say, nobody knows, least of all he himself, because he knows full well that he knows nothing and is unable to be of any use, and continues making haphazard guesses, in order that people should not lose faith in his knowledge. If she were all animal, she would not worry so much; if she were all man, she would have faith in God, and she would say and think as believers say: 'God hath given, God hath taken, you cannot go away from God.'

"The whole life with the children had been for my wife, consequently also for me, not a pleasure, but a torment. How could this have been avoided? She was in eternal worry. We would calm down from some scene of jealousy or simply from a quarrel, and we would try to live in peace, to read and think, or we would take up some work, when the sudden news would be brought to us that Vása was vomiting, or Másha was having a bleeding spell, or Andryúsha had an eruption,—well, there was an end to peace. Now the question was: 'Where must one gallop? for what doctors? how shall the children be isolated?' And there would begin clysters, temperatures, mixtures, and doctors. No sooner would one thing be finished, than another began. There was no regular, settled domestic life. There was only, as I have told you, an eternal anxiety on account of imaginary or real dangers. It is so now in the majority of families. In my family this was very pronounced. My wife was fond of her children and credulous.

"Thus the presence of children did not improve our life; it only poisoned it. Besides, the children were a new cause for dissensions. The children themselves were the means and objects of dissensions from the moment they existed, and the older they grew, the more frequently was this so. The children were not only the objects of our dissensions, but also the weapons of our battles,—we used our children, as it were, to fight each other with.

Each of us had a favourite child, the weapon of the fight. I fought mainly by means of Vása, the elder, and she by means of Líza. Besides, when the children grew up and their characters defined themselves, we attracted them to our sides. The poor things suffered dreadfully from it, but we, in our constant state of war, had no time to consider them. A little girl was my partisan, whereas the elder boy, who resembled her, her favourite, was frequently the object of my hatred.

## XVII.

“WELL, this is the way we lived. Our relations grew ever more hostile. Finally we reached such a stage that it was not the dissensions that caused the hostility, but the hostility which provoked the dissensions. No matter what she said, I disagreed with her from the start, and the same was the case with her.

“In the fourth year both sides came to the natural conclusion that we could not understand each other or agree. We did not even try to hear each other's opinions. In regard to the simplest things, especially in regard to the children, we invariably stuck to our ideas. As I think of them now, the opinions which I defended were not of such prime importance to me as not to admit of deviations; but she held the contrary view, and yielding would have meant yielding to her. That I could not do. Neither could she. She, no doubt, considered herself absolutely right in regard to me, while I was, to my thinking, a saint in her presence. When we were left alone, we were doomed to silence or to kinds of conversation which, I am sure, animals even could carry on: ‘What time is it? It is time to go to bed. What shall we have for dinner? Where shall I go? What do the papers say? Send for the doctor. Másha has a sore throat.’ It was enough for us to deviate a hair's breadth from this circle of conversations, which was contracted to impossible limits, in order to give irritation a chance to flame up.

“There were conflicts and expressions of hatred for the coffee, the table-cloth, the vehicle, the progress of the game of cards, — for things that could be of no importance to

either of us. In me, at least, a terrible hatred for her was frequently fermenting. I frequently looked at her, while she poured out the tea, swung her foot, or carried the spoon to her mouth and noisily sipped a liquid, and I hated her for it as for the meanest act. I did not notice then that the periods of irritation arose quite regularly and evenly in me, corresponding to the periods of what we called love. A period of love, then a period of irritation; an energetic period of love, a long period of irritation; a more feeble manifestation of love, a short period of irritation. We did not understand then that love and anger were the same animal sensations, only from opposite ends.

“It would have been terrible to live thus if we had understood our situation; but we did not understand, nor see it. A man’s salvation, and punishment at the same time, when he lives irregularly, lies in the fact that he can befog himself, in order not to see the wretchedness of his situation. This we did. She tried to forget herself in tense, always hurried occupations with household affairs, with her own and her children’s toilets, and with her children’s studies and health. I had my own affairs: drinking, service, the chase, cards. We were both all the time occupied. Both of us felt that the more we were occupied, the more infuriated we could be at each other. ‘It is easy enough for you to make grimaces,’ thought I, ‘but you have worn me out with your all-night scenes, and here I have to attend a meeting.’ ‘You are all right,’ she not only thought, but even said, ‘but I have sat up all night with the baby.’ All these new theories of hypnotism, mental diseases, and hysterics,—all that is not a simple, but a dangerous and abominable insipidity. Charcot would, no doubt, have said about my wife that she was hysterical, and of me he would have said that I was abnormal, and would have, no doubt, begun to cure me. But there was nothing there to cure.



"Thus we lived in an eternal fog, without seeing the situation we were in. If that which had happened had not taken place and if I had lived in the same manner until old age, I should, at my death, have thought that I had lived a good life, — not an especially good, but not necessarily a bad, life, — such as all live; I should not have come to comprehend that abyss of wretchedness and that contemptible lie in which I wallowed.

"We should have been two mutually hating prisoners, fettered with one chain, poisoning each other's life, and endeavouring not to see this. I did not know then that ninety-nine out of a hundred married couples live in the same hell, and that it cannot be otherwise. At that time I knew neither of others, nor of myself.

"It is remarkable what coincidences there are in well-regulated and even in badly regulated lives! Just when the life of the parents becomes unbearable to both of them, it becomes necessary to subject the children to the conditions of the city for the sake of their education. And thus rises the necessity of settling in the city."

He grew silent and once or twice uttered his strange sounds, which now perfectly resembled repressed sobs. We were getting near to a station.

"What time is it?" he asked.

I looked at my watch: it was two o'clock.

"Are you not tired?" he asked.

"No. But you are!"

"I have a choking feeling. Excuse me, I will walk a little and take a drink of water."

He went, staggering, through the car. I remained sitting alone, running through everything he had told me, and I was so lost in thought that I did not notice how he had come in by the other door.

## XVIII.

“YES, I digress all the time,” he began. “Much have I thought over. At many things I now look differently, and I feel like telling about this. Well, we began to live in the city. A man may live a hundred years in the city without perceiving that he has long been dead and decayed. There is no time to balance one’s own accounts,—one is too busy: with affairs, society obligations, health, art, the children’s health, their education. Now you must receive this and that person, now you must visit this and that one; and now again you must look at such and such a one, or listen to what they have to say. In the city there are, at any given moment, one, two, or three celebrities whom you cannot afford to miss. Now you have to cure yourself, or this or that child; and now you have to look for teachers, tutors, governesses, but in reality it is dreadfully empty. Well, thus we lived and felt less the pain of our companionship. Besides, at first we had admirable occupations: getting fixed in the new city and in our new apartments, and our migrations from the city to the country, and from the country back again to the city.

“We passed one winter in this way, but the next winter there happened the following apparently insignificant incident, which was not taken notice of by any one, but which produced that which later took place.

“She was not in good health, and the doctors told her that she must have no children, and taught her how to keep from having them. This disgusted me. I fought against it, but she insisted upon it with frivolous stubbornness, and I had to submit; the last justification of a

swinish life, the children, was taken away, and life became more abominable still.

"A peasant, a labourer, needs children. It is hard for him to bring them up, but he needs them, and therefore his conjugal relations are justified. But we people who have children, need no more children: they are an additional care, an expense, co-heirs, they are a burden. And thus there is no justification whatsoever for our swinish life. Either we artificially get rid of children or we look upon them as a misfortune, as the result of an accident, and this is still more abominable.

"There are no justifications. But we have fallen morally so deep that we do not even see the need of any justification.

"The majority of the contemporary educated world abandon themselves to this debauchery without the least compunction.

"There is no reason for feeling any compunction, because in our existence there is no other conscience than, if one may call it so, the conscience of public opinion and criminal law. In this case neither the one nor the other are violated: there is no cause to be conscience-stricken before society, because they all do it: Márya Pávlovna, and Iván Zakhárych. And what sense would there be in breeding paupers and depriving yourself of the possibility of leading a social life? Nor is there any cause for being conscience-stricken before the criminal law, or to be afraid of it. Those monstrous girls and soldiers' wives throw their children into ponds and wells,—they, of course, must be put in jail,—but we do it all at the proper time and in a decent manner.

"Thus we lived two more years. The measures of the scoundrel doctors apparently began to bear fruit: she became physically stronger and handsomer, like the last beauty of summer. She felt it and paid attention to it. There developed in her a certain provoking beauty which

made people feel uneasy. She was in all the strength of a thirty-year-old, non-bearing, well-fed, and irritated woman. A glance at her caused uneasiness. When she passed by men, she attracted their glances to her. She was like a long-rested, well-fed harnessed horse when its bridle is taken off. There was no bridle, just as is the case with ninety-nine hundredths of our women. I was conscious of it, and I felt terribly."

## XIX.

HE suddenly got up and sat down near the window.

"Pardon me," he said, and, staring through the window, sat thus for about three minutes in silence. Then he drew a deep breath and again seated himself opposite me. His face was quite changed, his eyes looked wretched, and what might be taken for a strange smile wrinkled his lips. "I am a little tired, but I will continue. There is much time yet, — day has not broken yet. Yes, sir," he began, after lighting a cigarette, "she grew plump as soon as she stopped having children, and her disease, — her eternal suffering on account of the children, began to pass away; it did not pass away exactly; rather, she seemed to awaken as if from an intoxication, she came to her senses, and saw that there was a whole God's world with its joys, which she had forgotten, but in which she did not know how to live, — a God's world, which she did not at all understand. 'I must not miss the chance! Time will pass, and it will never return!' Thus, I imagine, she reasoned, or rather felt, nor could she help reasoning and feeling like this: she had been educated to consider nothing more worthy of attention in the world than love. She had married, had tasted a little of that love, but nowhere near that which she had promised herself, which she had expected, and there had been so many disenchantments, so much suffering, and that unexpected torment, — so many children! This torment had worn her out. And now, thanks to obliging doctors, she had discovered that it was possible to get along without children.

"She was happy and conscious of it, and again bloomed forth for that one thing she knew, for love. But love for her husband, who had defiled himself by jealousy and malice of every kind, was no longer for her. She began to dream of another, a pure, new love,—at least I thought so about her. And she began to look around, as though expecting something. I saw it and could not help worrying. It came to be a usual occurrence for her to speak to me, even as she had done before, through a third person, that is, to speak to strangers while really addressing me, and, without thinking that but an hour before she had said the very opposite, to say boldly and half in earnest that maternal love was a deception, that it was not worth while to sacrifice life for the children's sake, that there was youth, and that life ought to be enjoyed. She busied herself less with the children, and not with such abandonment as before, but she was ever more concerned about herself and her exterior, even though she concealed this, and about her pleasures, and even about perfecting herself. She again took with enthusiasm to the piano, which had been entirely given up. This was the beginning of it all."

He again turned to the window with strained eyes, but, evidently making an effort over himself, he immediately continued :

"Yes, that man made his appearance— " He hesitated and once or twice emitted his strange nasal sounds.

I saw that it was painful for him to name that man, to recall him, to speak of him. But he made an effort, and, as if overcoming the impediment which was in his way, continued with determination :

"He was a worthless man, to my thinking, so far as I could judge him, not on account of the significance which he received in my life, but because he really was such. The fact that he was of no account only serves as a proof of how little amenable to reason she was. If not he, it



would have been another, — but it had to happen — ” He again grew silent. “ Yes, he was a musician, a violin player, — not a professional musician, but a semi-professional, a semi-society man.

“ His father is a landed proprietor, a neighbour of my father’s. His father had lost his fortune, and his children — there were three boys — had got up in the world; only this youngest one had been taken to his godmother in Paris. There he was sent to the Conservatory, because he had talent for music, and he graduated from it as a violin player, taking part in concerts. This man was — ” Apparently he was about to say something uncomplimentary of him, but he restrained himself and rapidly said, “ Well, I do not know the kind of life he led; all I know is that he made his appearance that year in Russia and that he appeared at my house —

“ Almond-shaped, moist eyes; red, smiling lips; pomaded moustache; the latest fashionable hair-dress; a common, handsome face, what women call not at all bad; of a weak, though not misshapen figure, with unusually well-developed hips, as with women, and such as, they say, Hottentots have. They, too, are musical. Forward to the point of familiarity, so far as possible, but sensitive and ever ready to stop at the least repulse, with the preservation of external dignity, and with that peculiar Parisian shade of his button shoes and brightly coloured ties and all that which strangers acquire in Paris and which, on account of its novelty, always affects women. In his manners an artificial, external cheerfulness, — that manner, you know, of saying everything by hints and snatches, as though you knew and remembered it all, and were able to supplement it yourself.

“ He, with his music, was the cause of everything. At the trial the case was presented as being the result of jealousy. Not at all, that is, it was not at all the reason of it, though it had something to do with it. At the

trial it was decided that I was a deceived husband and that I had killed her, while defending my honour (that is what they call it). And so they acquitted me. At the trial I endeavoured to explain things, but they understood me as wishing to rehabilitate my wife's honour.

"Her relations with the musician, whatever they may have been, have no meaning for me, nor for her either. But what has a meaning is that which I have told you about, that is, my swinishness. Everything happened because there was between us that terrible abyss of which I have told you, that terrible tension of mutual hatred, when the first cause was sufficient to produce a crisis. Our quarrels became toward the end something terrible, and were very startling, alternating with tense animal passion.

"If he had not appeared, another man would have. If there had not been the excuse of jealousy, there would have been something else. I insist that all men who live as I did must either take to debauch, or separate, or kill themselves, or their wives, just as I did. If this has not happened with them, it must be taken as an extremely rare exception. Even I have been, before ending as I did, several times on the brink of suicide, and she, too, had several times almost poisoned herself.

## XX.

“YES, it was even so before it happened.

“We lived in a kind of truce, when there seemed to be no reason for breaking it. Suddenly the conversation touches upon a certain dog, of which I say that it received a medal at the show. She says that it was not a medal, but honourable mention. A discussion ensues. We begin to jump from one subject to another and to hurl accusations at each other: ‘Of course, it is always that way.’ — ‘You said —’ — ‘No, I did not say.’ — ‘So I am lying?’ You feel that before you know it that terrible quarrel will be on, when you will kill yourself or her. You know that it will begin directly, and you are afraid of it as of fire, and you would like to restrain yourself, but fury takes possession of your whole being. And she, being in the same, but even worse condition, purposely misinterprets every word of mine, and every word of hers is saturated with poison; she stings me in whatever she knows is the most painful spot. The farther it goes the worse it gets. I cry out, ‘Shut up!’ or something of the kind.

“She jumps out of the room and runs into the nursery. I try to keep her back, in order to finish my sentence to her, and I seize her by the arm. She pretends that I have hurt her, and cries: ‘Children, your father is striking me!’ I cry out, ‘Don’t lie!’ — ‘It is not the first time!’ she cries, or something of the kind. The children rush to her. She calms them down. I say, ‘Don’t pretend!’ She says: ‘For you everything is pretence. You will kill a person, and then you will say that the person

pretends. Now I understand you. That is what you want to do!' — 'Oh, I wish you were dead!' I cry. I remember how these terrible words frightened me. I had not thought I could say such terrible, coarse words, and I wonder how they could have escaped from me. I cry these terrible words, and I run into my cabinet, and sit down and smoke. I hear her coming out into the antechamber and getting ready to depart. I ask her where she is going, but she does not answer. 'The devil take her,' I say to myself, returning to my cabinet, and I again lie down and smoke. A thousand different plans as to how to take my revenge on her and get rid of her, how to mend it all and make it appear as though nothing had happened, pass through my mind. I meditate over this, and I smoke, and smoke, and smoke. I think of running away from her, of hiding, of going to America. I go so far as to imagine how I shall be rid of her and how nice it will be when I shall unite with another beautiful and entirely fresh woman. I shall get rid of her by her death, or by being divorced from her, and I am planning how to do it. I see that I am getting mixed up and that I am not thinking of what I ought to think about, and in order not to see that I am not thinking of what I ought to think about, I smoke.

"Life at home goes on. The governess comes and asks: 'Where is madam? When will she return?' The lackey asks: 'Shall tea be served?' I come to the dining-room, and the children, especially the eldest, Líza, who can comprehend, look interrogatively and disapprovingly at me. We drink tea in silence. She is not yet back. A whole evening passes, she is not back, and two feelings alternately arise in my soul: anger with her for tormenting me and the children by her absence, which will end by her return, and fear that she will not return and will do something to herself. I should like to go to find her. But where shall I look for her? At her

sister's? It would be stupid to go there to ask. Well, if she wants to torment me, let her, too, be tormented. That is what she is waiting for. The next time it will be only worse. What if she is not at her sister's, but is doing or has already done something to herself? Eleven o'clock, twelve. I do not go to the sleeping-room,—it is stupid to lie there alone and wait,—I will lie down here. I want to busy myself with something, to write a letter, to read; but I am not able to do anything. I sit alone in my cabinet, and worry, and am angry, and listen. Three o'clock, four o'clock,—she is not back yet. Toward morning I fall asleep. I awake,—she is not back.

“Everything in the house goes as of old, but all are perplexed, and all look interrogatively and reproachfully at me, assuming that it is all my fault. Within me is the same struggle,—fury because she torments me so, and anxiety on her account.

“At about eleven o'clock in the morning her sister comes as her messenger to me, and there begins the customary: ‘She is in a terrible state. What can it be? Nothing has happened?’ I speak of the impossibility of her disposition, and say that I have not done anything.

“‘It cannot remain as it is,’ says her sister.

“‘It is all her doing, not mine,’ I say. ‘I will not make the first step. If we are to separate, well and good!’

“My sister-in-law goes away without having accomplished anything. I said boldly that I would not make the first step; but the moment she is gone and I go out and see the poor, frightened children, I am ready to make the first step. I should like to make it, but I do not know how. Again I walk around, I smoke, I drink brandy and wine at breakfast, and I reach the point which I unconsciously wish: I do not see the stupidity and meanness of my situation.

“About three o'clock she returns. She says nothing

to me as she meets me. I imagine that she is pacified, and I begin to tell her how her reproaches provoked me. She says with the same stern and terribly drawn face that she has come not to make explanations, but to take the children away, that we cannot live together. I tell her that it was not my fault, that she made me lose my patience. She looks sternly and solemnly at me, and then says: 'Don't speak another word, or you will regret it!' I say to her that I can't now stand any comedy. She shouts something which I cannot make out and runs to her room. The key rings out after her: she has locked herself in. I push the door, — there is no answer, and I go away in fury. Half an hour later Líza comes to me in tears. — 'What, what is the matter?' — 'We do not hear mamma.' — We go there. I jerk the door with all my might. The bolt is not well fastened, and both halves of the door come open. I walk up to the bed. She is lying uncomfortably on her bed, in her skirts and high shoes. On the table is an empty opium bottle. We bring her back to her senses. Tears, and, at last, we make up. We do not make up: in the soul of each is the same malice toward the other, with the addition of irritation for the pain inflicted by this quarrel, which one puts to the account of the other. But it has to be ended in some way, and life proceeds as of old.

"It was quarrels of this kind, and even worse quarrels that we had all the time, — once a week, or once a month, and, at times, even every day. And it was all the time the same. Once I went so far as to provide myself with a passport for abroad, — the quarrel had lasted two days. But after that there was again a semblance of an explanation, a patched-up peace, — and I remained.



## XXI.

“So these were our relations when that man made his appearance. He arrived at Moscow, — his name is Trukhachévski, — and showed up at my house. It was in the morning. I received him. We had once been on ‘thou’ terms. He manœuvred between ‘thou’ and ‘you,’ trying to stick to ‘thou,’ but I at once set the pace at ‘you,’ and he immediately submitted. I did not like him from the start. But, strange to say, a certain strange and fatal power urged me not to repel and remove him, but, on the contrary, to draw him closer to me. There would have been nothing simpler than talking coldly to him and seeing him out without introducing him to my wife. No, I, as it were on purpose, mentioned his playing, and said that I had been told that he had given up the violin. He told me that, on the contrary, he now played more than ever. He recalled what it was I used to play formerly. I told him that I had given up playing, but that my wife played well. A remarkable thing happened! My relations with him on that first day, during the first hour of our meeting, were just such as they could be only after all that has taken place. There was a certain restraint in my relations with him: I noticed every word, every expression, uttered by him or by me, and I ascribed an importance to them.

“I introduced him to my wife. They immediately began to talk about music, and he offered his services to her, to play with her. My wife, as always during this last period, was extremely elegant in appearance, and enticingly and disquietingly beautiful. She apparently

took a liking to him from the start. Besides, she was happy to have a chance of playing with a violin, which she liked so much that she used to hire a violinist from the theatre for the purpose, and her face beamed with joy. But, upon looking at me, she at once understood my feeling and so she changed her expression, and there began that game of mutual deception. I smiled a pleasant smile, making it appear that this gave me pleasure. He, glancing at my wife, as all immoral men look at a pretty woman, made it appear that he was interested only in the subject of the conversation, although it did not interest him in the least. She tried to seem indifferent, but my familiar false smile of a jealous man and his lustful glance apparently excited her.

"I noticed that from that first meeting on her eyes were peculiarly sparkling, and, obviously on account of my jealousy, there was established between them something like an electrical current, which provoked in them a similarity of facial expressions and smiles. She blushed and he blushed. She smiled and he smiled. They spoke of music, of Paris, of all kinds of trifles. He arose to leave, and stood, smiling, with his hat on his contracting thigh, looking now at her, and now at me, as though waiting to see what we would do. I remember that particular moment because I might have failed to invite him, and nothing further would have happened. But I looked at him and at her. 'Don't imagine that I am jealous,' I mentally said to her, 'or that I am afraid of you,' I mentally said to him, and I invited him to bring his violin some evening, in order to play with my wife. She looked at me in surprise, flared up, and, as though frightened at something, began to refuse, saying that she did not play well enough. This refusal irritated me even more, and I insisted more urgently.

"I remember the strange feeling with which I looked at the back of his head and at his white neck, which

stood out under his black hair, combed in both directions, as he was leaving us with a certain birdlike, hopping motion. I could not help confessing to myself that the presence of this man tormented me. 'It depends on me,' thought I, 'to fix it in such a way that I shall never see him again. But doing so would only be a confession that I am afraid of him. No, I am not afraid of him, — that would be humiliating,' I said to myself. And so I insisted in the antechamber, knowing well that my wife was hearing me, that he should come that same evening with his violin. He promised me he would, and went away.

"In the evening he came with his violin, and they played together. But the playing did not go smoothly, — they did not have the proper music, or if they did have it, my wife could not play it without preparation. I was very fond of music and was in sympathy with their playing, fixing a stand for him and turning the music. They managed to play something, some songs without words, and a sonata by Mozart. He played superbly; he possessed in the highest degree that which is called tone and, besides, a refined, noble taste, which was quite out of keeping with his character.

"He was, naturally, a much better musician than my wife; he helped her and, at the same time, politely praised her play. He bore himself very well. My wife seemed to be interested in nothing but the music, and was very simple and natural. But I, although pretending to be interested in the music, did not cease all the evening to be consumed by jealousy.

"I saw from the very first minute when their eyes met that the animal that was sitting in both of them, notwithstanding all the conditions of position and society, was asking, 'May I?' and answering, 'Oh, yes, certainly.' I saw that he had not at all expected to find in my wife, in a Moscow lady, such an attractive woman, and that

he was glad of it. He did not have the least doubt that she was *willing*. The whole question revolved only on keeping the intolerable husband out of the way. If I myself had been pure, I should not have understood it; but I used to think the same way about women, before I was married, and so I read in his soul as in a book.

“What tormented me more especially was that I had convinced myself that she had no other feeling for me than that of constant irritation, rarely interrupted by the usual sensuality, and that this man, by his external elegance and novelty, but especially by his unquestionably great musical talent, by the proximity due to their play in common, by the influence produced on impressionable natures by music, particularly by the violin, — that this man must of necessity not only be to her liking, but that he, without the least wavering, must vanquish, crush, and twist her, wind her into a rope, make of her anything he pleased. I could not help seeing all this, and I suffered terribly. Yet, in spite of it, or maybe on that very account, some power against my will made me be not only very polite, but even gracious to him. I do not know whether I did so for my wife’s sake, or for his, in order to show that I was not afraid of him, or for my own sake, in order to deceive myself, — however it may be, I could not be simple with him from my first relations with him. In order not to surrender myself to my desire of killing him on the spot, I had to be kind to him. I gave him costly wines to drink at supper, went into ecstasies over his playing, spoke with him with an unusually kindly smile, and invited him to dinner for the coming Sunday, when he could again play with my wife. I told him I would call together a few of my acquaintances, lovers of music, to listen to his playing. And thus came the end.”

Pózdnyshév in great agitation changed his position and emitted his peculiar sound.

“The presence of this man affected me in a strange

manner," he began once more, evidently making an effort to be calm.

"Two or three days later I returned home from some exhibition. I entered the antechamber, and a heavy sensation overcame me: I felt as though a stone had been rolled upon my heart, and I was unable to account for this sensation. There was something which reminded me of him, as I passed through the antechamber. Only when I had reached the cabinet did I find an explanation of it, and I returned to the antechamber to verify it. Yes, I was not mistaken: it was his overcoat. (Everything which came in contact with him I noticed very attentively, without being conscious of doing so.) I asked whether he was there, and I found he was. I went to the parlour, not through the drawing-room, but through the children's study. My daughter, Líza, was sitting over a book, and the nurse was with the baby at the table, spinning a lid or something. The door to the parlour was closed, and I there heard an even arpeggio and his voice and hers. I listened, but could not make out what it was.

"'Evidently the sounds of the piano are on purpose to drown their words and kisses,' I thought, — 'perhaps.' O Lord, what a storm rose within me! Terror takes possession of me as I think of what animal was then living within me! My heart was compressed and stopped, and then began to beat as with a hammer. The chief feeling, as during every rage, was that of compassion for myself. 'Before the children, before the nurse!' I thought. I must have been terrible, because Líza looked at me with strange eyes. 'What had I better do?' I asked myself. 'Had I better go in? I can't, — for God knows what I will do there. Nor can I go away. The nurse is looking at me as though she understood my situation. I must go in,' I said to myself, and rapidly opened the door. He was sitting at the piano and was making these arpeggios



with his large, white, arched fingers. She was standing at the corner of the grand over some open music. She was the first to see or hear me, and she glanced at me. I do not know whether she was frightened, or pretended not to be frightened, or really was not frightened, but she did not shudder, nor budge, — she only blushed, and that, too, after some time.

“‘How glad I am you have come! We have not yet decided what to play on Sunday,’ she said to me in a tone of voice which she would not have employed if we had been alone. This fact and her saying ‘we’ of herself and of him exasperated me. I silently exchanged greetings with him.

“He pressed my hand and immediately began to explain to me, with a smile which I interpreted as ridicule, that he had brought me some music for the Sunday, and that they could not agree what to play: whether it was to be more difficult and classical music, more especially a sonata by Beethoven with the violin, or some light things. Everything was so natural and simple that it was impossible to find any fault with anything; at the same time I was convinced that it was all an untruth, and that they had come to some kind of an agreement how to deceive me.

“One of the most agonizing situations for a jealous man (in our social life all men are jealous) is caused by certain social conditions under which the greatest and most perilous proximity between man and woman is permitted. One would become a laughing-stock of people, if one were to be set against the close proximity at balls, or the doctors’ proximity to their female patients, or the proximity during occupations with art, painting, or more especially with music. A certain proximity is necessary there, and there is nothing prejudicial in this proximity: only a foolish, jealous man can see anything undesirable in it. And yet, everybody knows that the greater part



of all cases of adultery in our society are committed by means of such occupations, especially by means of music.

"I evidently confused them by the confusion which was apparent in me: I was for a long time not able to say anything. I was like an upturned bottle, from which the water does not flow, because it is too full. I wanted to call him names, and drive him out, but, instead, I felt that I must again be gracious and pleasant to him. And so I was. I acted as though I approved of everything, submitting to that strange feeling which caused me to treat him with greater kindness in the measure as his presence tormented me. I told him that I depended on his taste, and that I advised her to do likewise. He remained long enough to wear off the unpleasant impression produced by my sudden entrance into the room with a frightened face and by my silence, and went away pretending to have decided what to play on the next day. I was fully convinced that, in comparison with that which interested them, the question what to play was quite a matter of indifference to them.

"I took him to the antechamber with especial politeness. (Why not see off a man who has come in order to break the peace and ruin the happiness of a whole family!) I pressed his white, soft hand with unusual kindness.

## XXII.

"I DID not speak with her all that day, — I could not. Her proximity to me provoked in me such a hatred of her, that I was afraid of myself. At dinner, she asked me, in the presence of the children, when I was going to leave. I had to go next week to the county to attend a meeting. I told her when. She asked me whether I needed anything for my way. I did not answer, and silently sat at the table, and silently went to my cabinet. During that last period she never came into my room, especially not then. I was lying down in my cabinet and fretting. Suddenly I heard a familiar tread. And suddenly a terrible, monstrous thought passed through my mind that she, like the wife of Uriah, wanted to conceal her accomplished sin, and that it was for this purpose that she was coming to my room at such an untimely hour. 'Is it possible she is coming here?' I thought, listening to her approaching steps. 'If she is coming here, then I am right.' And in my soul there rose an inexpressible hatred of her. Nearer, nearer the steps came. 'Will she really pass by and go into the parlour?' No, the door creaked, and there stood her tall, beautiful figure, and in her face and eyes there was timidity and supplication, which she tried to conceal, but which I saw, and the meaning of which I understood. I almost choked, — I so long held my breath, — and, continuing to look at her, I grasped the cigarette-holder and began to smoke.

"'How does this look? I come to sit with you awhile, and you smoke,' and she seated herself near me on the

divan, leaning toward me. I moved away so as not to come in contact with her.

“‘I see you are dissatisfied with my playing on Sunday,’ she said.

“‘I am not in the least,’ I said.

“‘But I see it.’

“‘Let me congratulate you if you do. All I see is that you are acting like a coquette. You find pleasure in all kinds of baseness, but to me this is terrible!’

“‘If you are going to swear like a cabman, then I will go away.’

“‘Go, but know that if you do not respect the honour of the family, I will not respect you (the devil take you), but will guard the honour of the family.’

“‘What is the matter, what?’

“‘Get out, for the Lord’s sake, get out!’

“I do not know whether she pretended that she did not understand or whether she really did not understand,—in any case she was offended, grew angry, and did not go away, but stopped in the middle of the room.

“‘You are absolutely impossible,’ she said. ‘With any one of your character not even an angel could get along,’ and, as always, wishing to sting me in the most painful manner, she reminded me of my action toward my sister (she referred to an incident when I lost my patience with my sister and told her a lot of rude things; she knew that it tormented me and so she stung me with it). ‘After this nothing from you will surprise me,’ she said.

“‘Yes, she will offend, humiliate, disgrace me, and then she will make me guilty of it,’ I said to myself, and I was suddenly seized by such terrible rage against her as I had never experienced before.

“I wanted now for the first time to give a physical expression to this rage. I jumped up and moved toward her; but just as I jumped up I remember that I became conscious of my rage and asked myself, ‘Is it right to

abandon myself to this feeling?' and immediately replied to myself that it was right, that this would frighten her, and so, instead of opposing myself to this rage, I began to fan it in myself and to take pleasure in its spreading more and more in me.

"‘Get away, or I will kill you!’ I shouted, walking up to her and grasping her arm. I consciously increased the intonations of rage in my voice, as I was saying this. I must have been terrible, because she was so intimidated that she did not have sufficient strength to leave, and only said: ‘Vásya, what is the matter with you, what is the matter?’ — ‘Get out!’ I bellowed louder still. ‘You will drive me to insanity. I will not answer for myself!’

"Having given the reins to my fury, I was intoxicated by it and wanted to do something unusual, which would show the highest degree of my fury. I just burned to strike and kill her, but I knew that this could not be, and so, to give full vent to my rage, I grabbed a paper-weight from the table and, crying once more, ‘Get out!’ I hurled it against the floor beyond her. I aimed purposely beyond her. Then she started to leave the room, but stopped at the door. And here, while she was able to see it (I did it that she should see it), I picked up a number of things from the table, candlesticks, the inkstand, and began to throw them on the floor, continuing to cry out: ‘Get out! Go away! I will not answer for myself!’ She went away, and I immediately stopped.

"An hour later the nurse came and informed me that my wife was in hysterics. I went to her: she was sobbing and laughing; she was unable to say a word, and continually shuddered with her whole body. There was no pretence there: she was really ill.

"Toward morning she quieted down, and we made up under the influence of that feeling which we called love.

"In the morning, when, after the pacification, I confessed to her that I was jealous of Trukhachévski, she was

not in the least embarrassed, but laughed out in the most natural manner, — so strange, so she said, did the possibility of being infatuated with such a man seem to her.

“‘Can a decent woman have any other feeling for such a man than the pleasure derived by music? If you want me to, I am ready never to see him again. Not even on Sunday, even though guests have been invited. Write to him that I am not well, and all is ended. It is disgusting to think that anybody, but especially he, should imagine that he is a dangerous man. I am too proud to allow any one to think so.’

“She was not telling an untruth. She believed all she was saying: she hoped with these words to elicit in herself contempt for him and in this way to defend herself against him, but she did not succeed. Everything was against her, more particularly that accursed music. So all was ended, and on Sunday the guests arrived and they again played together.

## XXIII.

"I THINK it is superfluous to say that I was very vain-glorious: if we are not to be vainglorious in our habitual life, then there is no cause for living at all. Well, on that Sunday I entered with zest into the preparations for the dinner and soirée with the music. I myself bought things for the dinner and called the guests.

"At about six o'clock the guests arrived, and he appeared in evening dress with diamond studs, showing poor taste. He bore himself with ease, replied to everything hurriedly and with a slight smile of agreement and comprehension, — you know, with that especial expression which says that everything you may do or say is just what he expected. Everything which was improper in him I now took notice of with particular pleasure, because all this served to calm me and show me that he stood for my wife on a low level to which, as she said, she could not descend. I did not allow myself to be jealous. In the first place, my torment had been too great and I had to rest from it; in the second, I wished to believe the assertions of my wife, and I did believe them. And yet, although I was not jealous, I was unnatural toward him and toward her, and during the dinner and the first part of the evening entertainment, before the music began, I continued to watch their motions and glances.

"The dinner was like all dinners, — dull and stiff. The music began quite early. Oh, how I remember all the details of that evening! I remember how he brought the violin, opened the case, lifted the cover which had been embroidered for him by a lady, took



out the violin, and began to tune it. I remember how my wife sat down, feigning indifference, under which I saw her conceal her timidity, — timidity mainly as to her own ability, — how she sat down with a look of indifference at the piano, and there began the usual *la* on the piano, the pizzicato of the violin, and the placing of the music. I remember how, then, they looked at each other, casting a glance at the seated guests, how they said something one to the other, and how then it began. He took the first chords. His face grew serious, stern, and sympathetic, and, listening to his tones, he picked the strings with cautious fingers. The piano replied to him. And it began — ”

Pózdnyshév stopped and several times in succession emitted his sounds. He wanted to speak, but he snuffed and again stopped.

“They were playing the Kreutzer Sonata by Beethoven,” he continued. “Do you know the first presto? You do?” he exclaimed. “Ugh! Ugh! That sonata is a terrible thing, particularly that part of it. Music, in general, is a terrible thing. I cannot understand what it is. What is music? What does it do? And why does it do that which it does? They say that music acts upon the soul by elevating it, — nonsense, a lie! It acts, acts terribly, — I am speaking for myself, — but not at all by elevating. It neither elevates nor humbles the soul, — it irritates it. How shall I tell it to you? Music makes me forget myself and my real condition; it transfers me to another, not my own condition: it seems to me that under the influence of music I feel that which I really do not feel, that I understand that which I do not understand, that I can do that which I cannot do. I explain this by supposing that music acts like yawning, like laughter: I do not want to sleep, but I yawn seeing people yawn; I have no cause for laughing, but I laugh hearing others laugh.

“ This music immediately, directly transfers me to the mental condition in which he was who wrote that music. I am merged in his soul, and am with him carried from one condition to another ; but I do not know why this happens with me. He who wrote it, say the Kreutzer Sonata, — Beethoven, — he knew why he was in such a mood ; this mood led him to do certain acts, and so this mood had some meaning for him, whereas for me it has none. Therefore music only irritates, — it does not end. Well, they play a military march, and the soldiers march under its strain, and the music comes to an end ; they play dance music, and I finish dancing, and the music comes to an end ; well, they sing a mass, I receive the Holy Sacrament, and the music comes to an end. But here there is only an irritation, but that which is to be done under this irritation is absent. It is for this reason that music is so terrible and often acts so dreadfully. In China music is a state matter. That is the way it ought to be. How can any one who wishes be allowed to hypnotize another, or many persons, and then do with them what he pleases ? And especially how can they allow any kind of an immoral man to be the hypnotizer ?

“ Into whose hands has this terrible power fallen ? Let us take for example the Kreutzer Sonata. How can one play the first presto in a drawing-room amidst ladies in décolleté garments ? To play this presto, to applaud it, and then to eat ice-cream and talk about the last bit of gossip ? These things should be played only under certain important, significant circumstances, and then when certain acts, corresponding to this music, are to be performed, and that is to be done which the music demands of you. But the provocation of energy and feeling which do not correspond to the time or place, and which find no expression, cannot help acting perniciously. Upon me, at least, it had a most terrible effect : it seemed to me as though entirely new feelings, new possibilities, of which

I had never known before, were revealed to me. 'Yes, that is so, it is quite different from what I used to think and feel about it; it is like this,' a voice seemed to say within me. What this new thing was which I had discovered I was not able to explain to myself, but the consciousness of this new condition was a pleasurable one. All the people present — among them my wife and he — presented themselves in a new light to me.

"After the allegro they played the beautiful, but common, and not new andante with trite variations, and a very weak finale. After that they played, at the guests' request, an elegy by Ernst, and some other trifles. All that was very nice, but it did not produce on me one-hundredth part of the impression which the first had produced. All this took place on the background of the impression which had been evoked by the first piece.

"I felt light and happy on that evening. I had never before seen my wife as she was on that evening. Those sparkling eyes, that severity and expressiveness while she was playing, and that complete dissolution, if I may so call it, and that feeble, pitiable, and blissful smile after they were through! I saw it all, but ascribed no other meaning to it than that she was experiencing the same as I, and that to her, as to me, there were revealed, or, as it were, brought back, new, unfelt sensations. The evening came to a successful end and all departed.

"Knowing that I was to leave in two days to attend to the meeting, Trukhachévski at leaving said that he hoped at his next visit to repeat the pleasure of the present evening. From this I could conclude that he did not consider it possible to be in my house during my absence, and this pleased me.

"It turned out that since I should not be back before his departure, we should not meet again.

"I for the first time pressed his hand with real joy and

thanked him for the pleasure he had given me. He, too, bade farewell to my wife. Their farewell seemed to me most natural and proper. Everything was beautiful. My wife and I were both very much satisfied with the evening.

## XXIV.

"Two days later I left for the meeting in the county, bidding my wife farewell in the best and quietest of moods.

"In the county there was always a great deal to do, and there was a special life, a special world by itself. There, in the office, I passed ten hours a day for two days in succession. On the second day they brought me a letter from my wife. I read it at once.

"She wrote about the children, about uncle, about the nurse, about purchases, and, among other things, she mentioned, as a most natural occurrence, that Trukhachévski had called, bringing the promised music, and that he had promised to play again with her, but that she had refused.

"I did not remember his having promised to bring any music: it seemed to me that he had then bidden her farewell for good, and so this startled me. I was, however, so busy that I had no time to think about it, and only in the evening, when I returned to my room, did I re-read the letter.

"Not only had Trukhachévski been at my house during my absence, but the whole tenor of the letter seemed to be strained. The furious beast of jealousy roared in its kennel and wanted to leap out, but I was afraid of that beast and I quickly locked it up. 'What an abominable feeling this jealousy is!' said I to myself. 'What can there be more natural than what she writes?'

"So I lay down in my bed and began to think of the affairs which I had to attend to on the following day.

During these meetings I could not easily fall asleep, in a strange bed, but this time I fell asleep at once. And, as sometimes happens, you know, you feel a kind of electric shock and you wake up. So I awoke. I awoke with the thought of her, of my carnal love for her, and of Trukha-chévski, and that everything was at an end between him and her. Terror and rage compressed my heart. But I began to reason with myself. 'What nonsense,' said I to myself, 'there is no cause for it, — there is nothing and has been nothing. And how can I so lower her and myself, by supposing such horrors? He — something in the nature of a hired fiddler, known as a worthless man, and a worthy woman, a respected mother of a family, *my* wife! What absurdity!' was what presented itself to me on one side. 'Why can't it be?' was what presented itself on the other. 'Why could there not be that simplest and most intelligible thing in the name of which I married her, the same thing in the name of which I lived with her, which alone I needed in her, and which, therefore, others could need, and that musician, too? He is unmarried, healthy (I remembered how he crunched the gristle in the cutlet and with what eager red lips he clasped the wine-glass), well-fed, smooth, and not only unprincipled, but obviously following the rule to make use of every pleasure which presents itself. And between them there is the bond of music, of the most refined sensual lust. What can keep him back? She? Who is she? She is the same mystery she has always been. I do not know her. I know her only as an animal. And nothing can nor must keep back an animal.'

"Only then for the first time did I recall their faces on that evening, when, after the Kreutzer Sonata, they played some impassioned piece, — I do not remember by whom, — impassioned to the point of obscenity. 'How could I have left?' I said to myself, recalling their faces. 'Was it not clear that everything had taken place between



them on that evening? And was it not evident that even on that evening there was no barrier between them, and that both of them, but especially she, experienced a certain measure of shame after what had happened to them? I remember how she smiled feebly, pitiaibly, and blissfully, wiping off the perspiration from her heated face, as I went up to the piano. They even then avoided looking at each other, and only at supper, as he poured out a glass of water for her, did they glance at each other and smile an imperceptible smile.'

"I now in terror recalled that glance of theirs with the barely perceptible smile, which I had accidentally noticed. 'Yes, all is ended,' one voice said to me, and immediately the other voice said something quite different: 'You are working under a delusion, — this cannot be.' It made me shudder to lie in the dark. I struck a match, and I felt terribly in that small room with the yellow wall-paper. I lighted a cigarette, and, as is always the case when I move in one and the same circle of insoluble contradictions, I smoked; I smoked one cigarette after another, in order to be befogged and not to notice the contradictions.

"I did not fall asleep all night long, and having decided at five o'clock that I could not remain any longer in this state of tension and that I must go home, I arose, woke the janitor, who was attending to me, and sent him for the horses. I sent a letter to the meeting saying that I was called back to Moscow on urgent business, and asking a member to take my chair. At eight o'clock I sat down in the tarantás and started."

## XXV.

THE conductor came in, and, noticing that the candle was burning low, put it out, without substituting another for it. Day began to break. Pózdnyshév was silent, drawing deep sighs as long as the conductor was in the car. He continued his story only when the conductor had left, and in the half-dark car could be heard only the rattle of the windows of the moving car and the even snoring of the clerk. In the twilight of the dawn I could not see Pózdnyshév's face at all. I could hear only his ever more agitated and suffering voice.

"I had to travel thirty-five miles in a carriage and eight hours by train. It was nice travelling in the carriage. It was a frosty autumn day with a bright sun, — you know, that period of the year when the ruts are clearly defined on the muddy road. The roads are smooth, the light is bright, the air bracing. It was a pleasure to ride in the tarantás. When it was day and I had started, I felt easier. As I looked at the horses, at the fields, and at the passers-by, I forgot whither I was travelling. At times it seemed to me that I was merely journeying, and that there was nothing of that which had provoked me. It was a relief to me to be able to forget myself thus. Whenever I recalled where I was travelling to, I said to myself: 'There will be time then, but now do not think!'

"In the middle of the road there happened an accident which detained me and still more diverted my attention: the tarantás broke and had to be repaired. This breakdown was of great importance in that it made me arrive at Moscow, not at five o'clock, as I had expected, but at

twelve, and at home at one, as I missed the express and had to take the passenger train. The search for a cart, the mending, the settling of bills, the tea at the inn, the talks with the janitor, — all that still more diverted my attention. At evening twilight all was done, and I started once more. In the night it was pleasanter to travel than in daytime. The new moon was up; there was a slight frost; then the beautiful road, the horses, the merry driver, — and I travelled and enjoyed myself, hardly thinking of what awaited me, or maybe I enjoyed it all so much because I knew what was awaiting me and I was bidding farewell to all the joys of life. This calm mood, this ability to suppress my feelings, came to an end with the carriage drive.

“The moment I entered the car, something quite different began for me. This eight-hour journey in the car was something terrible, — I shall not forget it all my life. I do not know whether it was that, seating myself in the car, I vividly presented to myself my arrival, or because the railroad acts in such an exciting manner upon people, but the moment I sat down in the car I could not control my imagination, and it did not cease painting for me with the greatest clearness, one after another, pictures that fanned my jealousy, and what was all the time going on there, while she was false to me. I burned with indignation, rage, and a certain special feeling of gloating over my humiliation, as I contemplated these pictures, and I could not tear myself away from them, could not help looking at them, could not wipe them out, could not help evoking them. More than that. The more I contemplated these imaginary pictures, the more I believed in their reality. The brightness with which these pictures arose before me seemed to serve as a proof that that which I imagined was real. A devil, as it were against my will, concocted and whispered to me the most terrible combinations. I recalled a late conversation with

a brother of Trukhachévski, and I with a kind of transport lacerated my heart with this conversation, referring it to Trukhachévski and my wife.

"That had happened long ago, but I recalled it. Trukhachévski's brother, I remembered once, in reply to a question whether he frequented certain houses, said that a decent man would not go where he might catch a disease, and it was dirty and nasty to do it, as long as one could find a decent woman. And so he, his brother, had found my wife. 'It is true, she is no longer in her first youth; she has lost one side tooth, and there is a certain puffiness,' I thought for him, 'but what is to be done? I must make use of what I find. — Yes, he is condescending to her in making her his mistress,' I said to myself. 'Besides, there is no danger with her — No, it is impossible!' I said to myself, in terror. 'There is nothing of the kind, nothing! There is not even basis for supposing anything of the kind. Did she not tell me that even the thought of my being jealous of him was humiliating to her? Ah, but she is lying, she is doing nothing but lying!' I called out, and it began once more — There were but two passengers in our car: an old woman and her husband, both very talkative, but they left at a station, and I remained all alone. I was like a beast in a cage: now I jumped up and walked over to the windows; now I staggered and began to walk as though to get ahead of the car; but the car with all its benches and windows kept shaking just like this one —"

Pózdnyshév jumped up, took a few steps, and again sat down.

"Oh, I am afraid, I am afraid of the railway cars, — terror takes possession of me! Yes, they are terrible!" he continued. "I said to myself that I would think of something else, say of the landlord of the inn where I drank the tea. And so before my mental eye arose the janitor with a long beard and his grandson, a child as old as my

Vásya. 'My Vásya! He will see the musician kiss his mother. What will take place in his poor soul? What does she care! She loves —' And again the same storm arose in me. 'No, no. I will think of the inspection of the hospital. Yes, how the patient yesterday complained of the doctor. The doctor has a moustache just like Trukhachévski's. With what a brazen face he — both of them — deceived me, when he said that he was leaving.' And again it began. Everything of which I thought was connected with him. I suffered terribly. My chief suffering was in the ignorance, the doubts, the doubleness, the want of knowledge of whether I was to love or hate her. The suffering was a strange feeling: a hatred of the consciousness of my humiliation and his victory, and a terrible hatred for her.

"'I cannot make an end of myself and leave her; she must suffer at least some, in order that she may understand what I have gone through,' I said to myself. I went out at every station to divert myself. In one station I saw people drinking near the counter, and I immediately drank some brandy. Near me was standing a Jew, and he also was drinking. He began to talk, and I, not to be left alone in the car, went with him into a dirty, smoke-filled car of the third class, the floor of which was covered with shells of pumpkin seeds. I sat down at his side, and he kept chatting and telling some kinds of anecdotes. I listened to him, but was unable to understand what he was saying because I was all the time thinking about myself. He noticed it and began to demand my attention; so I got up and went back to my car.

"'I must consider,' I said to myself, 'whether that which I am thinking is true, and whether there is any cause for me to be tormented so.' I sat down, wishing quietly to reflect over it, but immediately, instead of the quiet reflection, it started again: instead of meditation there were pictures and presentations. 'How often have

I been tormented thus,' I said to myself (I recalled former similar fits of jealousy) 'and then it all ended in nothing. It may be thus even now, and I am sure I shall find her quietly asleep; she will wake up, will be glad to see me, and from her words and looks I shall feel that nothing has happened, and that all this is nonsense. Oh, how good it would be!' — 'No, this has happened too often, and will not be so now,' a certain voice told me, and again it started. That is where the punishment was! Not to a syphilitic hospital would I take a young man in order to cure him of his desire for woman, but into my soul, to look at those devils that were tearing it to pieces! What was terrible was that I arrogated to myself, the unquestioned, full right over her body, as though it were my own body, and at the same time felt that I could not rule over this body, that it was not mine, and that she could dispose of it as she wished, and wished to dispose of it differently from what I wanted her to. And I could do nothing to her or to him. He, like Vánka, the steward of the fable, will sing before the gibbet a song of having kissed the sugared lips, and so forth, and his will be the victory. Still less can I do anything with her. If she did not do it, but wished to do it, — and I know that she does want to, — it is even worse. It would be better if she did do it, and I should know, — there would be no uncertainty. I could not tell what it was I wanted. I wanted her not to wish for that which she could not help wishing for. This was complete insanity!



## XXVI.

“AT next to the last station, after the conductor had come to collect tickets, I picked up my things and went out on the brake platform, and the consciousness of the near solution only increased my agitation. I felt cold, and my jaws began to tremble so that my teeth chattered. I mechanically left the depot with the crowd, took a cab, seated myself in it, and drove off. I rode, looking at the few pedestrians and the janitors and the shadows cast by the lamps and by my vehicle, now in front, and now back of me, not thinking of anything. Having ridden about half a verst, my feet grew cold, and I recalled that I had taken off my woollen stockings in the car and had put them into the carpet-bag. ‘Where is the carpet-bag,—here? Yes, it is. And the wicker trunk?’ I recalled that I had entirely forgotten about the luggage, but finding that I had a receipt, I decided that it was not worth while to go back for it, and so I continued on my way.

“No matter how much I try to recall now, I am absolutely unable to remember what my condition at that time was: I know nothing of what I thought or wished. I only remember having been conscious that something terrible and very important for my life was in store for me. I do not know whether this important thing happened to me because I thought of it, or because I had a presentiment of it. It may also be that after what happened all the previous moments received in my recollection a sombre shade. I drove up to the entrance. It was one o’clock. Several cabmen were standing near the entrance, expecting passengers from the lighted win-

dows (the windows that were lighted were those of the parlour and drawing-room of my apartment). Without rendering myself any account of why there was a light in our windows so late at night, I, in the same mood of expectation of something terrible, ascended the staircase and rang the bell. Egór, a good, careful, and most stupid lackey, opened the door. The first thing my eyes fell upon was an overcoat hanging with other clothes on the rack of the antechamber. I ought to have been surprised, but I was not, because I expected it. 'That's it,' I said to myself. When I asked Egór who was there and he named Trukhachévski, I asked whether there was anybody else. He said, 'Nobody, sir.' I remember how he told me this with an intonation as if to give me pleasure and dispel my doubts as to the presence of anybody else. 'Yes, yes,' I seemed to be saying to myself. 'And the children?' — 'Thank God, they are well. They have been asleep for quite awhile, sir.'

"I could not draw breath nor stop my jaws from shaking. 'So, I see, it is not as I had thought: formerly I used to expect a misfortune, but everything was as of old. Now everything is not as of old; here is everything I have been imagining, — everything I thought I only imagined has now actually happened. Here it is all —'

"I came very near sobbing out, but the devil immediately whispered to me: 'You weep and become sentimental, and they will quietly part from each other, there will be no proofs, and you will all your life be in doubt and torment.' Directly my sentimentality disappeared, and there arose a strange feeling of joy because now my torment will come to an end, because I could punish her and get rid of her, because I could give free play to my rage. I did give free play to my rage, — I became a beast, an evil, cunning beast. 'Don't, don't,' I said to Egór, who wanted to go to the drawing-room. 'Do this: take a cab at once and go to the station; here is the

receipt,—get the luggage. Go!’ He went along the corridor for his overcoat. Fearing lest he might scare them up, I went with him as far as his room and waited until he was dressed.

“In the drawing-room, beyond another room, was heard conversation and the sound of knives and plates. They were eating and had not heard the bell. ‘If only it may turn out I am wrong!’ I thought. Egór put on his Astrakhan fur overcoat and went out. I let him out and locked the door after him; I felt uneasy when I felt that I was left alone, and that I must act at once. I did not yet know how. I only knew that now everything was ended, that there could be no doubts in regard to her guilt, and that I would immediately punish her and break all my relations with her.

“Before this time I wavered and said to myself, ‘Maybe this is not true, maybe I am mistaken,’ but now there was nothing of that. Everything was irrevocably decided upon. Secretly from me, all alone with him in the night! This is a complete oblivion of everything! Or worse still: there is purposely such boldness and impudence in the crime in order that this boldness may serve as a token of innocence. Everything is clear,—no doubt is possible. I was afraid of this one thing that they would run away and concoct some new deception, thus depriving me of the palpable evidence and possibility of proof; therefore, in order to catch them at once, I went on tiptoe to the parlour, where they were sitting, not through the drawing-room, but through the corridor and the children’s rooms.

“In the first room the boys were sleeping. In the second, the nurse moved and was about to awaken. Imagining what she would think if she found out everything, such a pity for myself overcame me at the thought that I was unable to repress tears and, in order not to wake the children, I ran on tiptoe into the corridor and

into my cabinet, where I flung myself down on the divan and burst out into sobs.

“‘I am an honest man, I am the son of my parents, I have all my life dreamt of the happiness of domestic life; I am a man who has never betrayed her — Here are five children, and she embraces a musician because he has red lips!

“‘No, she is not a human being! She is a bitch, an abominable bitch! In the next room to her children, whom she has been pretending to love all her life. And to write to me what she did! So impudently to hang about his neck! How do I know but that it has been so all the time? Maybe the lackeys begot all the children whom I regard as my own!

“‘I should have arrived on the morrow, and she, in her coiffure, with her waist and her indolent, graceful motions (I saw all her attractive, hateful face), would have met me, and the beast of jealousy would have for ever remained in my heart and would have lacerated it. What will the nurse think? — Egór — And poor Líza! She understands a little now. And that impudence! That lie! And that animal sensuality, which I know so well!’ I said to myself.

“‘I wanted to get up, but I could not. My heart was beating so much that I could not stand on my feet. ‘Yes, I shall die of apoplexy. She will kill me. That is what she wants. She wants to kill me! No, that would be too advantageous for her, and I will not afford her that pleasure. Here I am sitting, and they are eating and laughing there, and — Yes, although she is no longer in her first youth, he has not disdained her: she is not bad-looking, but, chiefly, she is safe for his precious health. Why did I not choke her then?’ I said to myself, recalling the moment when, the week before, I drove her out of the cabinet and then hurled things at her. I vividly recalled the condition in which I then was; I not only

recalled it, but experienced the same necessity of beating and destroying which I experienced then. I remember how I wanted to act and how all other considerations than those which were necessary for action had taken flight from my mind. I entered into that condition of the beast or of a man under the influence of physical excitement in time of danger, when a man acts precisely, leisurely, but, at the same time, without losing a minute and with one definite purpose in view.

“The first thing I did was to take off my boots and, remaining in my socks, to walk over to the wall above the divan, where guns and daggers were hanging, and to take down a sharp Damascus dagger which had never been used and which was very sharp. I took it out of the scabbard. The scabbard, I remember, I threw behind the divan, and I remember saying to myself, ‘I must find it later, or else it will be lost.’ Then I took off my overcoat, which I had kept on all the time, and, stepping softly in my socks, I went there.

## XXVII.

"H<sup>A</sup>VING softly approached the door, I suddenly opened it. I remember the expression of their faces. I remember that expression, because it afforded me a painful pleasure, — it was the expression of terror. That was what I wanted. I shall never forget that expression of desperate terror which during the first second had appeared on their faces, as they caught sight of me. He, I think, was sitting at the table, but, upon seeing or hearing me, he jumped to his feet and stood up with his back against a safe. On his face was nothing but an unmistakable expression of terror. On her face there was also an expression of terror, but at the same time there was also something else. If there had been nothing but terror, probably that which took place would not have happened; but in the expression of her face there was — at least it so appeared to me during this first moment — annoyance, dissatisfaction at having been disturbed in her infatuation and happiness with him. It looked as though all she needed was that she should not be interfered with in her happiness. Both these expressions hovered but an instant on their faces. The expression of terror on his face soon gave way to a questioning expression: 'May I lie or not? If I may, I must begin. If not, there will happen something else. What will it be?' He cast an interrogative glance at her. Upon her face the expression of vexation and aggravation gave way, as I thought when she looked at him, to anxiety in his behalf.

"I stopped for an instant at the door, holding the dagger behind my back.



"Just then he smiled and said, in a ridiculously indifferent voice, 'We have been playing together.'

"'I did not expect you!' she at once began, submitting to his tone. But neither the one nor the other finished what they wanted to say: the same fury, of which I had been possessed the week before, overcame me now. I again experienced that necessity of destruction, violence, and transport of rage, and abandoned myself to it. They did not finish their sentences. There began that other thing, of which he was afraid, that which at once put to nought that which they had said. I rushed against her, still concealing the dagger, that he might not interfere with my thrusting it into her side, underneath the breast. I had chosen that spot from the very start. Just as I flew against her he saw it, and, what I had not expected of him, seized my arm and exclaimed: 'Think what you are doing! The people!'

"I tore my arm away from him and silently rushed against him. His eyes met mine; he suddenly grew as pale as a sheet, up to his very lips; his eyes flashed in a peculiar manner, and, what again I had not expected, he flung himself under the piano and out through the door. I rushed after him, but a weight hung upon my left arm. It was she. I tried to jerk myself away, but she clung more firmly to me and did not let me out of her grasp. This sudden impediment, the weight, and her touch, which was loathsome to me, fanned my rage even more. I felt that I was infuriated and that I must be terrible, and I was glad of it. I swung my left arm with all my might, and my elbow struck her face. She cried out and let my arm drop. I wanted to run after him, but recalled that it would be ridiculous to run after my wife's lover in my socks, and I did not want to be ridiculous, I wanted to be terrible. In spite of the terrible fury which I was in, I was all the time conscious of the impression I was producing upon others, and I was

partly guided by this very impression. I turned to her. She fell down on a sofa and, putting her hand to her blackened eyes, looked at me. In her face there was an expression of terror and hatred for me, the enemy, such as is expressed in a rat when the trap is opened, in which it has been caught. At least, I did not see anything else in her but this expression of terror and hatred for me. It was the same terror and hatred for me which the love for the other man must have provoked. I still might have abstained from doing what I did if she had kept quiet. But she suddenly began to speak and to seize the hand in which I held the dagger.

“‘Come to your senses! What are you doing? What is the matter with you? There is nothing, nothing. I swear!’

“I should have hesitated, but these last words, from which I concluded the opposite, that is, that there was everything, demanded an answer. And the answer had to correspond to the mood to which I had brought myself and which was going crescendo, and continued to become more intense. Fury, too, has its laws.

“‘Don’t lie, you wretch!’ I cried, and caught her arm with my left hand, but she tore herself away. Then I, without dropping the dagger, caught her by the throat with my left hand, threw her down on her back, and began to choke her. How rough her neck was! She clasped my hands with both of hers, pulling them away from her throat. I seemed to have waited just for that: with all my might I thrust the dagger into her left side, below the ribs.

“When people say that in a fit of fury they do not remember what they are doing, they are telling an untruth. I remembered everything, nor did I stop remembering for a single second. The more I raised within me the steam of my fury, the more clearly did the light of consciousness burn within me, so that I could not help

seeing all I was doing. I knew every second what I was doing. I cannot say that I knew in advance what I was going to do, but at any second when I was doing something, — I almost think even a little before it, — I knew what I was doing, as though having a chance of regretting my action, and of saying that I might have stopped it. I knew that I struck her below the ribs, and that the dagger would enter. At the very moment when I was doing it I knew that I was doing something terrible, something which I had never done before, and which would have terrible consequences. But this consciousness flashed like lightning, and the deed followed immediately after the consciousness. The deed was perceived by me with unusual clearness. I heard, and I remember, the momentary resistance of the corset and of something else, and then the sinking of the dagger in something soft. She caught the dagger with her hands and only cut them, without keeping it back.

“I for a long time thought of this moment later, in prison, after the moral transformation had taken place in me; I recalled what I might have done, and I reflected. I remember how for an instant, only for an instant, the deed was preceded by the terrible consciousness that I was killing and already had killed a woman, a helpless woman, my wife! I remember the horror of that consciousness, and so I conclude and even dimly remember that, having pierced her with a dagger, I immediately pulled it out, wishing to mend that which I had done, and to stop it. I stood a moment motionless, waiting to see what would happen and whether it could not be mended.

“She jumped to her feet and cried, ‘Nurse, he has killed me!’

“The nurse, who had heard the noise, was standing at the door. I was still standing, waiting, and not believing myself. Just then the blood burst from under her corset.

Only then did I understand that it could not be mended, and I immediately concluded that it was not necessary to mend it, that it was precisely what I wanted and what I had to do. I waited until she fell down, and the nurse with a cry of 'Help!' ran up to her, and then only threw down the dagger and went out of the room.

"'I must not be agitated; I must know what I am doing,' I said to myself, without looking at her or at the nurse. The nurse was crying and calling the maid. I went through the corridor and, having sent in the maid, went back to my cabinet. 'What must I do now?' I asked myself, and immediately saw what. Upon entering the cabinet, I went directly up to the wall, took down a revolver from it, and examined it: it was loaded,—and I put it down on the table. Then I took the scabbard out from behind the divan and sat down on the divan.

"I sat thus for a long time. I thought of nothing, recalled nothing. I heard them bustling outside. I heard somebody arrive, and then again somebody. Then I heard and saw Egór come in and bring my wicker trunk into the cabinet. As though anybody wanted it!

"'Have you heard what has happened?' I asked him. 'Tell the janitor to inform the police.' He said nothing and went out. I got up, locked the door, took out the cigarettes and matches, and began to smoke.

"I had not finished one cigarette when sleep overpowered me. I must have slept about two hours. I remember I dreamt that we were on good terms, that we had had a quarrel and had made up again, that there was something in the way, but we were friends. I was awakened by a rap at the door. 'This is the police,' I thought, as I awoke. 'I think I killed her. And maybe it is *she*, and there has been nothing.' There was another rap at the door. I did not answer and I decided the question, 'Has it happened, or not? Yes, it has.' I re-

membered the resistance of the corset and the sinking of the dagger, and a chill ran down my back. 'Yes, it has. And now I must do away with myself,' I said to myself. I said this, and I knew that I would not kill myself. Still, I arose and took the revolver into my hands. But, strange to say, although I had often been near committing suicide, although even on that day this had seemed to me an easy thing to do, as I was riding on the railway, easy because I thought I would startle her with it, — now I was not only unable to do so, but even to think of it. 'Why do I want to do it?' I asked myself, and there was no answer. They again knocked at the door. 'Yes, first I must find out who is knocking. I shall have time to do this.' I put down the revolver and covered it with a newspaper. I went up to the door and opened the latch. It was my wife's sister, a kind, stupid widow. 'Vásya, what is this?' she said, and the ever ready tears burst forth.

"'What do you want?' I asked, roughly. I saw that there was no reason whatever for me to be rough with her, but I could not think of any other tone of voice. 'Vásya, she is dying! Iván Zakhárych said so.'

"Iván Zakhárych was her doctor, her adviser. 'Is he here?' I asked, and all my rage against her again rose in me. 'Well what of it?' — 'Vásya, go to her. Ah, how terrible it is!' she said. 'Shall I go to her?' I asked myself, and I immediately answered myself that I must, that, no doubt, it is always that way, — that when a man kills his wife he must go to see her. 'If that is the way it is done, I must go,' I said to myself. 'Well, if it is necessary for me to shoot myself, I shall have time to do so,' I thought in regard to my intention of killing myself, and followed her. 'Now there will be phrases and grimaces, but I will not submit to them.' 'Wait,' I said to her sister, 'it is foolish to go without my boots. Let me at least put on my slippers.'



## XXVIII.

“A STRANGE thing happened! When I left my room and walked through the familiar rooms, I again was stirred by the hope that nothing had happened, but the smell of the physician’s nasty things, of the iodoform and carbolic acid, startled me. Yes, it has happened. Walking along the corridor, past the children’s room, I saw Líza. She looked at me with frightened eyes. I thought that all five of the children were there, looking at me. I went up to the door, and the chambermaid opened it for me from within and went out. The first thing that my eyes fell upon was her light gray dress upon the chair, all black with gore. On our double bed — on my bed (it was easier to get at it) — she lay with uplifted knees. She lay in a very inclined position, on pillows, with her bodice unbuttoned. There was something placed over the wound. The room was filled with the heavy odour of iodoform. Nothing impressed me so much as her swollen face, with part of the nose and the lower part of the eyes blue and discoloured. This was the result of the blow with my elbow, when she tried to keep me back. There was no beauty whatever, and I saw only something abominable in her. I stopped at the threshold. ‘Go up, go up to her,’ her sister said to me. ‘No doubt she wants to confess,’ I thought, trying to be magnanimous. I walked over to her. She with difficulty raised her eyes, one of which was badly bruised, and she muttered with difficulty and hesitatingly :

“‘You have accomplished it, you have killed me —’



and in her face, through the physical suffering and the nearness of death, there was expressed the old, familiar, cold, animal hatred. 'The children — however — I will not give — to you — She' (her sister) 'will take them —'

"But that which to me was the most important thing, her guilt, she did not consider worth while mentioning, so it seemed.

"'Yes, enjoy your deed,' she said, looking at the door, and she began to sob. At the door stood her sister with the children. 'Yes, this is what you have done.'

"I looked at the children, at her bruised, discoloured face, and for the first time I forgot myself, my rights, my pride, — for the first time I saw the human being in her. And so insignificant seemed everything to me which had offended me, all my jealousy, and so significant what I had done, that I wanted to fall with my face to her hand and say, 'Forgive me!' but I did not dare to.

"She was silent and covered her eyes, evidently not having the strength to speak any more. Then her maimed face quivered and became wrinkled. She feebly pushed me away.

"'Why has all this been, why?'

"'Forgive me!' I said.

"'Forgive you? It is all nonsense! If only I could live!' she cried, and, raising herself a little, her feverishly shining eyes were directed toward me. 'Yes, you have got what you wanted! — I hate you! — Oh, oh!' she called out, evidently already in delirium, as though frightened at something.

"'Shoot! I am not afraid! — Kill everybody! — He got away! — Away! —'

"Her delirium lasted the rest of the time. She did not recognize anybody. She died that very day, at noon. Before that time, at eight o'clock, I was taken to the police station, and then to prison. While staying there

eleven months and waiting for the trial, I thought about myself and my past, and I understood it. I began to understand it on the third day. On the third day they took me back there — ”

He wanted to say something, but stopped, being unable to keep back his sobs. Having collected himself, he continued :

“ I began to understand only when she was in her grave — ”

He sobbed, but immediately continued in a hurry :

“ Only when I saw her dead face I understood all I had done. I understood that it was I who had killed her ; that through me she, who had been alive, moving, warm, had become immovable, waxlike, cold ; and that this could never, nowhere, in no way, be mended. He who has not passed through it cannot comprehend it. Ugh ! Ugh ! Ugh ! ” he cried several times and grew silent.

We sat for a long time in silence. He sobbed and trembled, sitting silently in front of me. His face grew thin and drawn and his mouth was stretched out to its full width.

“ Yes,” he suddenly exclaimed, “ if I had known then what I know now, things would have been different. I would not have married her for anything — I would not have married at all.”

Again we sat for a long time in silence.

“ Well, forgive me — ” He turned away from me, lay down on the bench, and covered himself with his plaid. At the station where I had to get off, — it was eight o'clock in the morning, — I went up to him, to bid him good-bye. I did not know whether he was asleep or only pretended to be, but he did not stir. I touched him with my hand. He uncovered himself, and it was evident that he was not sleeping.

“ Good-bye,” I said, offering him my hand. He gave

me his and barely smiled such a pitiable smile that I felt like weeping.

“Yes, forgive me,” he repeated the word with which he had concluded his story.

EPILOGUE TO THE KREUT-  
ZER SONATA

1890



## EPILOGUE TO THE KREUTZER SONATA

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I HAVE received many letters from strangers asking me to explain in simple and clear words what I think of the subject of the story which I wrote under the title of the "Kreutzer Sonata." I shall try to do so, that is, in a few words to express, so far as possible, the essence of what I had intended to convey by my story, and of the conclusions at which one may arrive from it.

I wanted to say, *in the first place*, that in our society there has formed itself a firm conviction, common to all classes and supported by the false science, that sexual intercourse is necessary for health, and that, since marriage is not always possible, sexual intercourse outside of matrimony, which does not put men under any other obligations than that of monetary payment, is quite natural and worthy of emulation. This conviction has become so general and deep-rooted that parents, by the advice of doctors, arrange debauchery for their children; governments, whose only meaning consists in the care for the moral well-being of its citizens, establish debauchery, that is, regulate a whole class of women, who are to perish bodily and morally, in order to satisfy the imaginary needs of men, while unmarried men abandon themselves to this debauchery with the calmest conscience.

And so I wanted to say that this is not good, because it is not right that for the sake of the health of one class of people it should be necessary to ruin the bodies and souls of another class, just as it is not right that for the



sake of the health of one class of people it should be necessary to drink the blood of others.

The natural conclusion from this, it seems to me, is that it is not good to submit to this delusion and deception. And, in order not to submit, it is necessary, in the first place, not to believe in this immoral doctrine, no matter by what imaginary science it may be supported, and, in the second, to understand that such sexual intercourse, where people free themselves from its possible consequences, from children, or shift the whole burden of these consequences to the woman, or prevent the possibility of childbirth,—that such sexual intercourse is a transgression of the simplest requirement of morality, that it is base, and that, therefore, unmarried men, who do not wish to live basely, must not do it.

But, in order to be able to abstain, they must, in addition, lead a natural life, not drink, not stuff themselves, not eat meat, and not avoid labour (I do not mean gymnastics, nor play, but fatiguing labour); they must not permit themselves to think of the possibility of intercourse with strange women, just as all men exclude the possibility of intercourse between themselves and their mothers, sisters, relatives, and the wives of their friends.

Any man may find a hundred proofs about him that continence is possible and less dangerous and injurious to him than non-continence.

So much in the first place.

*Secondly*, that in our society, on account of the current view in regard to carnal love as not only a necessary condition of health and as a pleasure, but also as a poetical, exalted good of life, marital infidelity has become in all strata of society (especially among the peasants, thanks to militarism) a most common phenomenon.

I assume that this is not good. The conclusion which springs from it is that one ought not to do it.

But, in order not to do it, it is necessary for the view

in regard to carnal love to change. Men and women ought to be educated in their homes and by public opinion to look, before and after marriage, on infatuation and the carnal love connected with it, not as upon a poetical and exalted condition, such as it is now considered to be, but as upon an animal condition, degrading to man; it is necessary that the violation of a promise of fidelity, given at marriage, should be punished by public opinion certainly in no lesser degree than are punished the violations of monetary obligations and mercantile frauds, and that it should not be extolled, as it is now, in novels, poetry, songs, operas, etc.

So much in the second place.

*Thirdly*, that in our society, again on account of the false meaning which is ascribed to carnal love, the procreation of children has lost its purpose, and, instead of being the aim and justification of marital relations, has become a hindrance in the pleasant continuation of amatory relations; that, therefore, outside of wedlock and in wedlock, there has begun to spread, at the advice of the servants of the medical science, the use of means depriving women of the possibility of childbirth, or there has arisen a custom, a habit (that which had not been before and even now is not found in patriarchal peasant families) of continuing the conjugal relations during pregnancy and nursing. I assume that this is not good.

It is not good to use means preventive of childbirth, in the first place, because people are thus relieved of cares and labours in regard to children, who serve as a redemption of carnal love, and, in the second, because it comes very near to the act which is most repulsive to a human conscience, to murder. Nor is non-continenence during pregnancy and nursing good, because it is destructive of the physical, and still more of the mental, powers of woman. The conclusion which springs from

this is that it is not good to do it. But, in order not to do it, it must be understood that continence, which forms a necessary condition of human dignity in the single state, is still more binding in marriage.

So much in the third place.

*Fourthly*, that in our society, where children appear as a hindrance to enjoyment, or as an unfortunate accident, or as a peculiar kind of enjoyment, when there are borne a predetermined number of them, these children are brought up, not in conformity with the problems of human existence, with which they will be confronted as sensible and loving beings, but only in conformity with those pleasures which they may afford their parents. In consequence of this, the children of human beings are brought up like the young of animals, so that the chief problem of the parents does not consist in preparing them for an activity which would be worthy of man, but (in which view the parents are supported by the false science called medicine) in feeding them as well as possible, in increasing their stature, in making them clean, white, beautiful (if this is not done in the lower classes, the fault is that of circumstances, for the view there held is the same). In these pampered children, as in all overfed animals, there is early developed an unnatural and insuperable sensuality, which is the cause of terrible suffering for these children in their youth. The attire, the reading, the shows, the music, the dances, the sweet food, the whole circumstance of life, from the pictures on the boxes to the novels, stories, and poems, — everything still more fans this sensuality, and in consequence of this, the most terrible sexual vices and diseases become the usual conditions of the bringing up of children of both sexes, and frequently remain so through manhood.

I assume that this is not good. The conclusion which may be drawn from it is that we must stop bringing up the children of men like the young of animals, and that

other aims must be kept in view in the bringing up of children besides a beautiful, well-kept body.

So much in the fourth place.

*Fifthly*, that in our society infatuation between a young man and a young woman, which has, after all, carnal love at its base, has been exalted into the highest poetical aim of human tendencies, to which all the art and poetry of our society bear witness. The best part of young people's lives are passed, by men, in discovering and taking possession of the best objects of love in the form of love-affairs or of marriage, and by women and girls, in alluring and drawing men into love-affairs or marriage.

Thus the best powers of people are wasted not only on unproductive, but even on dangerous, work. From this originates the greater part of the senseless luxury of our life; from this comes the indolence of men and the shamelessness of women, who do not disdain the fashions which are borrowed from notoriously debauched women, and which lay bare and accentuate the parts of the body that provoke sensuality.

I assume that this is not good.

It is not good because the attainment of the aim of being united in wedlock or of being outside of wedlock with the object of love, however much extolled by poetry it may be, is unworthy of man, just as the aim of obtaining sweet and superabundant food, which presents itself to many as the highest good, is unworthy of man.

The conclusion to which we may arrive from this is that we must cease thinking that carnal love is something peculiarly exalted; we must come to understand that the aim which is worthy of man is to serve humanity, his country, science, or art (let alone serving God), whatever it may be, as long as it is worthy of man, and that this aim is not attained through a union with the object of love in wedlock or outside of wedlock, but that, on the contrary, infatuation and union with the object of love

(however much the opposite may be attempted to be proved in poetry and prose) never makes the attainment of the aim which is worthy of man any easier, but always impedes it.

So much in the fifth place.

These are the essentials which I wished to express, and which, I think, I have expressed in my story. It seemed to me that there might be a difference of opinion as to how the evil to which these propositions point may be mended, but that it was impossible not to admit their truth. It seemed to me that it was not possible to deny the truth of these propositions, in the first place, because they are entirely in agreement with the progress of humanity, which has always marched from looseness of morals to an ever increasing chastity, and with the moral consciousness of society, with our conscience, which always condemns looseness of morals and values chastity; and, in the second place, because these propositions are the inevitable deductions from the teaching of the Gospel, which we profess, or, at least, even though it be only unconsciously, assume as the basis for our ideas of morality.

But it has turned out quite differently.

Nobody, it is true, directly disputes the proposition that debauchery should not be practised, either before or after marriage, that it is wrong artificially to destroy childbirth, that children are not to be made playthings, and that amatory union ought not to be placed higher than anything else,—in short, nobody denies that chastity is better than looseness of morals. But they say: "If the single state is better than wedlock, then people ought evidently to do that which is better. But, if people do that, then the human race will come to an end, and therefore the destruction of the human race cannot be its ideal." Yet, not to mention the fact that the destruction of the human race is not a new conception for the people



of this world, being a dogma of faith with the religious people and for the scientific men an inevitable deduction from the observations in regard to the sun's congealment, — there is in this expression a great, wide-spread, and old misunderstanding. They say: "If people will reach the ideal of complete chastity, they will be destroyed, and therefore the ideal is wrong." But those who say so purposely or unwittingly mix up two different things, — a precept and an ideal.

Chastity is not a rule or a precept, but an ideal, or, more correctly, one of its conditions. An ideal is only then an ideal when its realization is possible in the idea only, in thought, when it presents itself as attainable only at infinity, and when, therefore, the approach to it is infinite. If an ideal were not only attainable, but we could imagine its realization, it would cease to be an ideal. Such is Christ's ideal, the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth, — an ideal which had been foretold even by the prophets when they said that the time would come when the people would be instructed by God, when the swords would be forged into ploughshares and the spears into sickles, when the lion would lie with the lamb, when all the creatures would be united in love. The whole meaning of human life consists in a motion toward this ideal, and therefore the striving after the Christian ideal, in all its entirety, and after chastity, as one of the conditions of this ideal, not only does not exclude the possibility of life, but, on the contrary, the absence of this Christian ideal would destroy all movement forward and, consequently, all possibility of life.

The reflection that the human race would come to an end if people should with all their power tend toward chastity resembles that other reflection which might be made (and it is made), that the human race will perish if people, instead of struggling for existence, should with all their power tend to the realization of love for their neigh-



bour, for their enemies, for all living beings. Such reflections spring from the inability to distinguish between two rules of moral guidance.

Just as there are two ways for indicating the road to a traveller, even thus there are two ways for moral guidance in the case of a man who is seeking the truth. One way consists in indicating to the man the objects which he will come across, and then he is guided by these objects.

The other way consists in giving the man the direction by the compass, which he is carrying with him, and on which he observes the one immutable direction, and, consequently, every deflection from it.

The first way of moral guidance is the way of external definitions, of rules: man is given definite tokens of acts which he must perform and which not.

"Observe the Sabbath, be circumcised, do not steal, drink no intoxicating drink, kill no living being, give the tithe to the poor, make your ablutions, and pray five times a day," and so forth,—such are the injunctions of external religious teachings,—of the Brahmanical, Buddhistic, Mohammedan, Hebrew, and the ecclesiastic, falsely called Christian.

The other way is to indicate to man unattainable perfection, the striving after which man is cognizant of: man has pointed out to him the ideal, in relation to which he is at any time able to see the degree of his divergence from it.

"Love God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. — Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect."

Such is the teaching of Christ.

The verification of the execution of external religious tenets is the coincidence of the acts with the injunctions of these tenets, and this coincidence is possible.

The verification of the execution of Christ's teaching is the consciousness of the degree of its non-correspondence with the ideal perfection. (The degree of approximation is not visible; what is visible is the deflection from perfection.)

A man who professes an external law is a man who is standing in the light of a lamp which is attached to a post. He is standing in the light of this lamp, he sees the light, and he has no other place to go to. A man who professes the teaching of Christ is like a man carrying a lamp before him on a more or less long pole: the light is always before him; it always incites him to follow it, and continually opens up in front of him a new illuminated space which draws him on.

The Pharisee thanks God for executing everything.

The rich youth also executes everything from his childhood, and he cannot understand what may be wanting to him. Nor can they think otherwise: there is not in front of them that toward which they may continue to strive. The tithe has been delivered, the Sabbath has been kept, the parents are respected, there is no adultery, no theft, no murder. What else shall it be? But in him who professes the Christian teaching the attainment of any new round of perfection incites the necessity of stepping on the next round, from which a still higher round is perceived, and so on without end. He who professes Christ's Law is always in the position of the publican. He always feels himself imperfect, not seeing the road behind him, which he has passed, but only the road in front of him, which he has not yet travelled upon and which he must pass over.

In this consists the difference between the teaching of Christ and all other religious teachings, — a difference consisting not in the difference of demands, but in the difference of the way of guiding men. Christ gave no definitions of life. He never established any institutions,

he never established marriage. But people who do not understand the peculiarities of Christ's teaching, who are accustomed to external tenets, and who wish to feel themselves in the right, as does the Pharisee, contrary to the whole spirit of Christ's teaching, — have out of the letter made an external teaching of rules, and have substituted this teaching for Christ's true teaching of the ideal.

The church teachings, which call themselves Christian, have in all manifestations of life substituted for Christ's teaching and ideal the external injunctions and rules which are contrary to the spirit of the teaching. This has been done in reference to government, courts, armies, churches, divine service; this has also been done in reference to marriage. Disregarding the fact that Christ nowhere established marriage, — on the contrary, whenever he mentioned an external rule it was to oppose it ("Forsake thy wife and follow me"), — the church teachings, which call themselves Christian, have established marriage as a Christian institution, that is, they have established external observances which make sexual love sinless and entirely lawful for a Christian.

Since in the true Christian teaching there are no foundations for the institution of marriage, the result has been that people of our world have departed from one shore without landing on the other, that is, they do not believe, in reality, in the church definitions of marriage, feeling that this institution has no foundation in the Christian teaching, and at the same time not seeing before them Christ's ideal, which is concealed by the church doctrine, — the striving after complete chastity, they are left without any guidance in relation to marriage. From this comes the seemingly strange phenomenon that with the Jews, Mohammedans, Lamaists, and others, who profess religious teachings of a much lower order than the Christian, but who possess precise external injunctions in regard to marriage, the family principle and conjugal fidelity are

incomparably more firmly rooted than with the so-called Christians.

They have definite concubinage, and polygamy, and polyandry, limited by certain restrictions. But with us there is complete looseness,—there is concubinage, and polygamy, and polyandry, not subject to any limitations, and concealed under the aspect of supposed monogamy.

Only because over a small part of the persons united the clergy performs a certain ceremony, called church marriage, people of our world naïvely or hypocritically imagine that they are living in matrimony.

There cannot be and never has been such a thing as Christian marriage, just as there has not been and cannot be a Christian divine service (Matt. vi. 5–12; John iv. 21), nor any Christian teachers and fathers (Matt. xxiii. 8–10), nor Christian property, nor army, nor courts, nor state.

Thus the early Christians always understood it.

The Christian's ideal is love of God and his neighbour, self-renunciation in order to serve God and his neighbour; carnal love, marriage, means serving oneself, and therefore is, in any case, a hindrance in the service of God and men, and, consequently, from the Christian point of view, a fall, a sin.

Entering into matrimony cannot coöperate with the service of God and men even in that case when those who enter into marriage have in view the continuation of the human race. Rather than enter into marriage in order to procreate children, it would be much simpler for such people to sustain and save the lives of those millions of children who are perishing around us through want of material, not to say of spiritual, food.

Only then could a Christian enter into marriage without the consciousness of a fall, a sin, if he saw and knew all the existing lives of children to be secure.

We may reject the teaching of Christ, that teaching which permeates all our life and upon which all our

morality is based, but, if we accept this teaching, we cannot fail to acknowledge that it points out the ideal of complete chastity.

The Gospel says clearly and without any possibility of misinterpretation, in the first place, that a married man must not be divorced from his wife, in order to take another, and that he must live with the one with whom he has come together (Matt. v. 31-32; xix. 8); in the second place, that for man in general, both married and unmarried man, it is sinful to look upon woman as an object of enjoyment (Matt. v. 28-29), and, in the third place, that for an unmarried man it is better not to marry at all, that is, to be absolutely chaste (Matt. xix. 10-12).

Many, very many people will regard these thoughts as strange and even contradictory. They really are contradictory, but not among themselves. These thoughts are contradictory to our whole life, and involuntarily the doubt arises who is right: these thoughts, or the lives of millions of people and my own? I experienced the same feeling in the highest degree, as I arrived at the convictions which I am expounding here: I had not in the least expected that the progress of my thoughts would bring me to what it has. I was terrified at my deductions and wished not to believe them, but it was impossible not to believe. However much these deductions contradict the whole structure of our life, however much they contradict that which I thought and expressed before, I was compelled to acknowledge them.

"All these are general reflections, which may be just. But they refer to the teaching of Christ and are obligatory for those who profess it; but life is life, and it is impossible, by pointing out Christ's unattainable ideal, to leave people in one of the most burning and common questions, which produces most misery, with nothing but this ideal and without any guidance whatsoever.



"A young, impassioned man will at first be carried away by the ideal; then he will not be able to endure it and will break loose, and, not knowing, nor acknowledging any rules, he will fall into complete debauchery!"

Thus they reason usually.

"Christ's ideal is unattainable, therefore it cannot serve us as a guide of life; we may speak and dream of it, but it is not applicable to life, and therefore we must abandon it. We need, not an ideal, but a rule, a guidance, which shall be according to our strength, according to the mean average of the moral powers of our society: an honourable church marriage, or even one which is not entirely honourable, where one of the parties entering into matrimony, as the man with us, has already come together with many individuals of the other sex, or at least marriage with the possibility of divorce, or civil marriage, or (proceeding in the same path) a Japanese marriage, for a definite time, — why may we not also reach the houses of prostitution?"

They say that this is better than street debauchery. The trouble is that, having allowed ourselves to degrade the ideal in accordance with our weakness, we are unable to find the limit at which to stop.

But this reflection is false from the start: first of all it is a false supposition that the ideal of infinite perfection cannot be a guidance for life, and that, looking at it, it is necessary to dismiss it with a motion of the hand, saying that it is useless to me because I can never attain it, or to degrade the ideal to the level on which my weakness wants to stand.

To reflect in this manner is the same as though a navigator should say: "Since I cannot go in the direction indicated by the compass, I shall throw away the compass or cease looking at it, that is, I will abandon the ideal or will fasten the needle of the compass to the place which at a given moment will correspond to the direction



of my vessel, that is, I will degrade the ideal in accordance with my weakness."

The ideal of perfection which Christ has given us is not a dream or a subject for rhetorical sermons, but a most necessary, most accessible guide of moral life for man, just as the compass is a necessary and accessible implement guiding the navigator; all that is necessary is to believe in the one as in the other. In whatever situation a man may be, the teaching about the ideal, given by Christ, is sufficient in order to obtain the safest indication of those acts which one may and which one may not perform. But it is necessary completely to believe in this teaching, this one teaching, and to stop believing in any other, just as it is necessary for the navigator to believe in the compass, and to stop looking at and being guided by what he sees on both sides. One must know how to be guided by the Christian teaching, how to be guided by the compass, and for this it is most important to understand one's position, and to be able not to be afraid precisely to indicate one's own deflection from the one, ideal direction. No matter on what round man may stand, there is always a possibility of his approaching this ideal, and no position of his can be such that he should be able to say that he has attained it and no longer can strive after a greater approximation.

Such is the striving of man after the Christian ideal in general and after chastity in particular. If the most varied positions of people, from innocent childhood until marriage, when continence is not practised, were to be considered in respect to the sexual question, then at every stage between these two positions the teaching of Christ, with its ideal which it puts forward, will always serve as a clear and definite guide to what man ought and ought not to do at every one of these stages.

What are a pure young man and girl to do? To keep themselves pure against temptations, and, in order that

they may be able to give all their strength to the service of God and men, to strive after a greater and greater chastity of thoughts and desires.

What are a young man and girl to do, who have fallen a prey to temptations, whose thoughts are absorbed in indefinite love or in love for a certain individual, and who thus have lost a certain portion of their ability to serve God and men? Again the same: not to allow themselves to fall, knowing that such weakness will not free them from temptation, but will only strengthen it, and to continue to strive after greater and greater chastity in order to be able the more fully to serve God and men.

What are people to do if they have not come out victorious from the struggle and have fallen? To look upon their fall not as a lawful enjoyment, as people now do, when it is justified by the ceremony of marriage, not as an accidental enjoyment which may be repeated with others, not as a misfortune if the fall has been committed with an inferior person and without the ceremony, but to look upon this first fall as the only one, and upon themselves as having entered upon an indissoluble marriage.

This entering into marriage, with the consequences springing from it, the birth of children, determines for those who have entered into matrimony a new, more limited form of serving God and men. Before marriage man could serve God and men directly, in most varied forms, but his entering into matrimony limits his field of action and demands of him the bringing up and education of the progeny arising from marriage, the future servants of God and men.

What are a man and a woman to do, who are living in wedlock and performing that limited service of God and men, by means of bringing up and educating their children, as befits their position?

Again the same: to strive together after liberation from temptation, after self-purification, and cessation of sin, by exchanging the relations which impede the general and particular service of God and men, by exchanging carnal love for the pure relations of brother and sister.

Therefore it is not true that we are not able to be guided by Christ's ideal because it is so high, so perfect, and so unattainable. We cannot be guided by it only because we are lying to ourselves and deceiving ourselves.

When we say that we must have more realizable rules than Christ's ideal, or else we, without reaching Christ's ideal, shall fall into debauchery, we do not mean by this that Christ's ideal is too high for us, but that we do not believe in it and that we do not wish to determine our acts by this ideal.

When we say that having once fallen we become subject to debauchery, we only say by this that we have decided in advance that a fall with an inferior individual is not a sin, but a pastime, an infatuation, which need not be mended by what we call marriage. But if we understood that the fall is a sin which must and can be redeemed only by the indissolubility of marriage and all the activity which springs from the education of children born in wedlock, then the fall could in no way be the cause of becoming debauched.

This would, in reality, be the same as though a farmer should not consider as a sowing that sowing which gave him no crop, but, sowing in a second and third place, should regard as real sowing that which was successful. It is obvious that that man would ruin much land and seed, and would never learn to sow properly. Make chastity your ideal, consider every fall, of any person, with any person, as the only marriage, indissoluble through life, and it will become clear that the guidance given by Christ is not only sufficient but also the only possible.

"Man is weak,—he must receive a task which is according to his strength," say people. This amounts to saying: "My hands are weak and I cannot draw a straight line, that is, one which is the shortest distance between two points, and therefore, in order to make it easier for myself, though wishing to draw a straight line, I will take a curved or a broken line as my guide." The weaker my hand is, the more perfect must my guide be.

It is not right, having come to know the Christian teaching of the ideal, to act as though we did not know it, and to substitute external definitions for it. The Christian teaching of the ideal is open to humanity because it can guide it at its present age. Humanity has passed out from external religious injunctions, and nobody believes in them.

The Christian doctrine of the ideal is the only one which can guide humanity. We must not, we should not substitute external rules for the ideal of Christ, but this ideal must be kept firmly before us in all its purity, and, above everything else, we must believe in it.

To him who was navigating near the shore it was possible to say: "Watch that elevation, promontory, tower," and so forth.

But a time came when the navigators passed away from the shore, and their guides could be and must be only the unattainable luminaries and the compass which points out the direction. Both are given to us.



ON THE RELATION BETWEEN  
THE SEXES

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## ON THE RELATION BETWEEN THE SEXES

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AMONG the letters which I received from various places in reference to the "Kreutzer Sonata" and the "Epilogue," which show that the necessity of changing our view on the relation of the sexes has been recognized by others as well,—by a large majority of thinking people, whose voices are not heard and not noticed only because they are drowned by the cry of the people of the crowd, who stubbornly and rancorously defend the usual order of things, which abets their passions,—among these letters I received, on October 7, 1890, the following letter, with the enclosure of a pamphlet entitled *Diana*, of which it makes mention. Here is the letter:

"NEW YORK, October 7, 1890.

"We have the pleasure of sending you a small pamphlet entitled: *Diana, a psycho-physiological essay on sexual relations for married men and women*, which, we hope, you will receive.

"Ever since your production, 'The Kreutzer Sonata,' made its appearance in America, many have been saying: *Diana* fulfils, explains, and makes possible Tolstóy's theories. And so we have decided to send you this pamphlet, so that you may be able to judge for yourself.

"Praying that the wish of your heart be fulfilled, we remain,  
Yours sincerely, BURNS Co.

"We shall be happy if you inform us of the receipt of the pamphlet."

Before that I had received from France a letter from Angèle Françoise and her pamphlet.

In this letter Mrs. Angèle informed me of the existence of two societies which have for their aim the encouragement of the purity of the sexual relations, — one in England, and another in France, — *Société d'amour pur*. In the article by Mrs. Angèle the same thoughts were expressed as in the *Diana*, but less clearly and less definitely, and with a shade of mysticism.

The thoughts expressed in the pamphlet *Diana*, though having at their base not the Christian, but rather a pagan, Platonic world conception, are so new and so interesting, and so obviously show the irrationality of the established dissipation, both in the celibate and in the married life of our society, that I want to share these thoughts with my readers.

The fundamental idea of the pamphlet, the motto of which is, "And they twain shall be one flesh," is the following:

The difference in the organization of man and woman exists not only in a physiological relation, but also in other moral qualities, which in man are called masculinity, in woman femininity. The attraction between the sexes is not based on the striving after physical intercourse alone, but also on mutual attraction, which these opposite properties of the sexes exert upon one another, femininity upon man and masculinity upon woman. One sex strives to be complemented by the other, and so the attraction between the sexes produces an equal tendency toward the spiritual as toward the physical union. The strivings after physical and after spiritual intercourse are manifestations of one and the same source of attraction, which are in such interdependence that the gratification of one striving invariably weakens the other. In proportion as the striving after spiritual intercourse is satisfied, the striving after the physical union is weakened

or entirely destroyed, and vice versa: the gratification of the physical attraction weakens and destroys the spiritual. And so the attraction between the sexes is not merely physical, productive of the propagation of children, but also the striving of the two sexes toward one another, capable of assuming the form of the most spiritual intercourse of ideas alone, of mere animal intercourse, productive of the propagation of children, and of all the various steps between the two. The question as to the degree at which the approximation of the sexes stops is decided by this, what intercourse the uniting pair consider good, necessary, and so desirable for a given time or for ever. (A remarkable illustration of the fact that the relation between the sexes is subject to the conception of what is considered good, necessary, and desirable is found in the striking custom of Little-Russian "bridegrooming," which consists in this, that the betrothed lads for years pass the nights with their brides without violating their virginity.)

A full gratification for the individual uniting pair is found in the degree which these persons consider good, necessary, and desirable, and depends on their personal view. But independently of it, naturally, objectively, one degree of intercourse must give more satisfaction to all than any other form of it. Now what intercourse gives this highest satisfaction naturally, to all, independently of the personal view of the uniting pair, — the one which approaches the spiritual, or the one which approaches the physical? The answer to this question, clear and indubitable, though contradicting everything which people in our society are in the habit of thinking about it, consists in this, that the nearer the form of intercourse is to the physical limit, the more is the desire fanned, and the less satisfaction is received; the nearer it is to the opposite extreme, to the spiritual limit, the less are new desires evoked, the fuller is the satisfaction. The nearer to the first, the more destructive of vital force, and the

nearer to the second, the spiritual, the more calm, joyous, and strong is the mutual condition.

The union of man and woman into one flesh, in the form of inseparable monogamy, the author considers an indispensable condition of the highest human development. Marriage, therefore, forming a natural and desirable condition for all men who have reached maturity, is, according to the author, not necessarily a physical union, but may also be spiritual. According to conditions and temperaments, but chiefly, according to what the uniting pair consider necessary, good, and desirable, marriage will for some time approach spiritual intercourse, and for others physical intercourse; but the more the intercourse will approach the spiritual, the fuller will its satisfaction be.

Since the author recognizes that the same sexual tendencies may lead to spiritual intercourse, — to love, — and to physical intercourse, — to productiveness and childbirth, — and since one activity passes into the other in dependence on consciousness, he naturally not only does not recognize the impossibility of continence, but even considers it natural and a necessary condition of a rational sexual hygiene, both in marriage and outside it.

The whole article is enhanced by a rich selection of examples and illustrations of what it tells about, and by physiological data as to the processes of the sexual relations, their effects upon the organism, and the possibility of consciously directing them upon this path or that, — to love or to productiveness. In confirmation of his idea the author quotes the words of Herbert Spencer: "If a certain law," says Spencer, "contributes to the good of the human race, human nature will of necessity submit to it, so that the submission to it will become a pleasure to man." And so we must not, says the author, depend too much on established habits and conditions which now surround us, but must rather look upon what

a man must and can be in the brilliant future before him.

The author expounds the essence of everything said as follows. The fundamental theory of *Diana* is this, that the relations between the sexes have two functions: the productive and the love function, and that the sexual force, so long as there is no conscious desire to have children, ought always to be directed upon the path of love. The manifestation which this force will assume depends on reason and on habits, in consequence of which the gradual agreement of reason with the principle here expounded and the gradual formation of habits in agreement with them will free men from many sufferings and will give them the gratification of their sexual strivings.

At the end of the book there is added a remarkable "Letter to parents and instructors," by Eliza Burns. This letter, though treating subjects which are considered indecent (calling things by their names, and indeed it could not be otherwise), can have such a beneficent influence upon unfortunate youth, which is suffering from excesses and irregularities, that the dissemination of this letter among grown men who in vain ruin their best forces and their good, and chiefly among poor boys perishing only through ignorance, in families, schools, gymnasia, and especially military schools and closed institutions, would be a true benefaction.

*October 14, 1890.*



## EXTRACTS FROM DIARIES AND PRIVATE LETTERS

ON sexual intercourse I have expressed my view, as much as I could, in the epilogue to "The Kreutzer Sonata." The whole question is decided briefly: a man must always, under all circumstances, — whether he is married or single, — be as chaste as possible, as Christ said, and Paul after him. If he can be so continent as not to know a woman at all, that is the best he can do. But if he cannot contain himself, he must as rarely as possible submit to this weakness, and by no means look upon the sexual intercourse as upon a "*jouissance*." I think that any sincere and serious man cannot help but look upon the matter in this way, and that all men of this kind agree upon this.

And there is a letter from the editor of *The Adult* on free love. If I had time, I should like to write on this subject. No doubt I will write about it. The main thing is to show that the whole question is in securing the greatest amount of pleasure for oneself, without any thought of the consequences. Besides, they preach what already exists and is very bad. Why will the absence of external restraint mend the whole matter? I am, of course, against all regulation and for full liberty, but the ideal is chastity, and not enjoyment.

All the calamities which are begot by the sexual relations, by amorousness, are due to nothing but this, that we mix up the carnal lust with the spiritual life, with, —

it is terrible to say so, — with love ; we employ our reason, not to condemn and determine this passion, but to deck it out with the peacock feathers of spirituality.

This is where *les extrêmes se touchent*. To ascribe all the attraction between the sexes to sexual lust seems very material, whereas, on the contrary, it is a most spiritual relation — to segregate from the spiritual sphere everything which does not belong to it, in order to be able to esteem it highly.

Passion, the source of the greatest calamities, we do not lower or moderate, but, on the contrary, fan with all our means, and then we complain that we suffer.

A woman who dresses herself up fans the passion in herself. Even while dressing others up, she lives in imagination in lust. For this reason dresses exert such an influence on women.

Fornicator is not a curse word, but a condition (I think harlot is, too), a condition of unrest, curiosity, and demand for novelty (like a drunkard), which comes from intercourse for pleasure's sake, not with one, but with many. One can contain oneself, but a drunkard is a drunkard, and a fornicator is a fornicator, and they fall with the first weakening.

What weakens us in our struggle with temptation is this, that we busy ourselves in advance with the idea of victory, that we take up a task which is above our strength, a task which it is not in our power to do, or not to do. We say to ourselves in advance, like a monk : " I promise to be chaste," meaning by it external chastity. This is, in the first place, impossible, because we cannot imagine those conditions in which we may be placed, and in which we shall not withstand the temptation. And, besides, it is bad ; it is bad, because it does not aid us in reaching

the goal, in approaching the highest chastity, but on the contrary.

Having decided that their task consists in observing external chastity, they either leave the world, avoid women, like the monks on Mount Athos, or make themselves eunuchs and disdain that which is most important, the internal struggle with besetting thoughts in the world, amidst temptations. This is the same as though a soldier should say to himself that he would go to war, but only under the condition that he should be certain to be victorious. Such a soldier will have to avoid real enemies and to fight with imaginary foes. Such a soldier will not learn how to fight and will always be bad.

Besides, this placing before oneself the task of external chastity and the hope, sometimes the certainty, of realizing it, have also this disadvantage, that, striving after it, every temptation to which man is subject, and so much the more the fall, at once destroys everything and makes one doubt the possibility, even the legality, of the struggle. "Consequently it is impossible to be chaste, and I have put a false task before myself." And it is all over, and the man abandons himself completely to lust and sinks in it. It is the same as in the case of a soldier with an amulet, which in his imagination makes him immune against death and wounds. Such a soldier loses his last bit of valour, and runs away at the slightest wound or scratch which he receives.

Only this can be the task: the attainment of the greatest chastity, in conformity with my character, my temperament, and the conditions of my past and present, — not before other men, who do not know what I have to struggle against, but before myself and before God. Then nothing impairs or arrests the motion; then the temptation, even the fall, — everything leads to one aim, — to the departure from the animal and the approach to God.

The Christian teaching does not determine the forms of life, but only in all relations of man indicates the ideal, the direction; the same is true in the sexual question. But the people who are not of a Christian spirit want the determination of forms. For them was invented the church marriage, which has nothing Christian about it. But in the sexual relations, as in those others of violence, of anger, we must not and should not leave out of sight the ideal, or distort it. But it is this that the churchmen have done with marriage.

Through the misunderstanding of the Christian spirit people are generally divided into Christians and non-Christians. The coarsest division consists in regarding only him who has been baptized as a Christian; equally incorrect is the division of men, though it is less coarse, who on the basis of Christ's teaching live a pure domestic life, who are not murderers, etc., and to call them Christians in contradistinction to those who live differently. In Christianity there is no line of demarcation between a Christian and a non-Christian. There is the light, the ideal Christ; and there is darkness, the animal, and — a motion, in the name of Christ, toward Christ along this path.

Even so the ideal in relation to the sexes is full, complete chastity. A man who serves God can wish as little to get married as to get drunk; but there are various stages on the path to chastity. There is one thing that can be said for those who want an answer to the question, "Shall I get married, or not?" It is this: If you do not see the ideal of chastity and do not feel the necessity of abandoning yourself to it, then walk toward chastity, without knowing it yourself, by the unchaste path of marriage. Just as I, being tall of stature and seeing before me a bell-tower, cannot point it out to an undersized man who is walking by my side and does not see it,

as the direction of his path, but am obliged to point out to him some other landmark on the same path: such a landmark is honest marriage for those who do not see the ideal of chastity. But this can be pointed out by me or you; Christ never pointed out anything else, nor could he have pointed out anything but chastity.

To struggle,—even that is life, and that alone is life. There is no rest whatever. The ideal is always ahead, and I am never calm so long as I do not move toward it, even if I do not reach it.

Take the ideal of celibacy. The gratification of the physical sensation, which for a time calms passion, does not satisfy me, just as the feeding of all the hungry around me does not satisfy me in an economic sense. What will satisfy you is nothing but the clear contemplation of the ideal in all its height, a similarly clear contemplation of your weakness in all its remoteness from the ideal, and the striving after an approach to the ideal. This only will satisfy you, and not your placing yourself in such a position that you, by half-closing your eyes, are able to avoid seeing the difference of your position from the demand of the ideal.

The struggle with the sexual passion is a most difficult struggle, and there is no position and no age, except first childhood and the most advanced old age, when a man is free from this struggle, and so we must not be vexed by this struggle, but must hope that it is possible to come to a state in which it will not exist, and not for a moment weaken, but remember and use all those means which weaken the foe: avoid what excites the body and the soul, and try to be busy. That is one thing. Another thing is: if you see that you will be vanquished by the struggle,—get married, that is, choose a woman who agrees to enter into wedlock, and say to yourself that if

you cannot help falling, you will fall with none other than this woman, and with her bring up your children, if there shall be any, and with her, supporting her, arrive at chastity, the sooner, the better. I know no other means. But above all, to be able successfully to make use of either means, strengthen your connection with God, think as frequently as you can that you came from Him and return to Him, and that the meaning and aim of this whole life consists in nothing but doing His will.

The more you will remember Him, the more will He aid you.

Another thing: Do not get discouraged if you fall; do not imagine that you are lost, and that you have no reason for watching yourself after that, but must dissipate. On the contrary, if you have fallen, struggle on with greater energy.

Accesses of sexual passion beget a tangle of ideas, or rather, an absence of ideas. The whole world will grow dark; the relation to the world is lost. Accidentalness, darkness, impotence.

Poor man, you have suffered very much from this terrible passion, especially when it is unbridled, that is, when it has already come into play. I know how it veils everything and for a time destroys everything heart and reason lived by. But there is one salvation from it, — and that is, to know that it is a dream, a suggestion, which will pass, and I shall return to real life, to the spot at which it seized me. It is possible to know this even in moments of its power. May God help you.

Do not forget that you have never been and never will be completely chaste, but that you are at a certain stage of an approach to chastity, and so you must never get discouraged in this approach: in moments of temptation,



in moments of fall even, do not stop recognizing what you are striving after, and say to yourself: "I am falling, but I hate the fall, and I know that if not now, at least later, the victory will be, not on its side, but on mine."

A man must set himself the problem, not of chastity, but of the approach to chastity. Strictly speaking, a living man cannot be chaste. A living man can only strive after chastity, for the very reason that he is not chaste, but subject to passion. If a man were not subject to passion, there would not exist for him any chastity, nor the concept of it. The mistake consists in setting to ourselves the problem of chastity (of the external condition of chastity), and not that of striving after chastity, of the internal acknowledgment at all times and in all conditions of life of the superiority of chastity to debauchery, of the superiority of greater purity to lesser.

This mistake is very important. For a man who has set to himself as the problem the external condition of chastity, the departure from this external condition, the fall, destroys everything and interrupts activity and life; for a man who has set to himself as the problem the striving after chastity, there is no fall, no interruption of activity; and temptations, and the fall, may fail to interrupt the striving after chastity, and frequently even intensify it.

When people do not know any other good than personal enjoyment for themselves alone, love, amorousness, presents itself as an elevation; but having experienced the sentiment of love for God and for our neighbour, having become Christians even in the weakest degree, so long as this sentiment is sincere, it is impossible to do otherwise than look on amorousness from above as on a sentiment from which it is desirable to be freed. Why

should you not have been satisfied with this Christian, brotherly love? And so, pardon me, what you say about your love for her supporting you in your purity, is offensive for woman. Every man, especially a Christian, wants to be an instrument of spiritual, and not physical, action. Keep your purity by your own powers, and offer a love which is pure and free from all advantages. Do not exchange God for man; God will give you incomparably more of everything, even the most unexpected, and will give you the love of that man besides. You write that you must save her. I absolutely fail to see from what. And why and for what do you pity her? Among us people frequently repeat the mistake of wishing to get married in some special, new fashion. As Christ has said and Paul has confirmed, and our reason confirms, he who can contain himself and remain chaste, let him contain himself; and who cannot, let him be married. But it is impossible to get married in a new fashion: one cannot marry differently from the way all get married, that is, by choosing a mate, deciding to remain true to her, not abandoning her until the grave, and trying with her to reëstablish the lost chastity. Even though we cannot ascribe any meaning to the performance of the ceremony and of various customs, we cannot look upon marriage in any other way than the rest understand it. It is not proper and it is impossible to mix up any higher religious consideration with marriage. As marriage took place in a natural way, in consequence of mutual attraction, so it will always take place. And if this mutual attraction be wanting, marriage as such is a bad thing.

I understand, I think, both of you, and should like very much to help you in order to extract from your relations what is painful and agitating in them, leaving that which is good and joyful. She is quite right when she says that exclusive love is not only no love for God, but

even interferes with that love. But this exclusive love, the one which you experience toward her, is a fact and just as indubitable, and one cannot help but count with it as with the presence of the body and the properties of character, which it is impossible to destroy. Having recognized the existence of the fact, we must act in such a way as to take what is best from it and reject what is bad. What is good is the consciousness of the loveliness of what is loved, and what is loved is loved not egotistically, but for the purpose of aiding one another to serve God's work. That is joy. But in order that this may be joy, you must sterilize it well from the exaggeration of amorousness (and you are guilty of this), from the consequent and exclusive exaction, jealousy, and every kind of abomination, which is covered up with good names. My practical advice is,—do not rummage in your sentiments, do not communicate everything to one another (this is not concealment, but reserve), and write about yourself, about common matters. That you love her exclusively, and she you, she knows, and you know, and so you know all the motives of your acts and words. There is a limit to the interchange of sentiments, which must not be crossed, but you have crossed it. This limit is such that beyond it every transmission of sentiments becomes not a joy, but a burden.

Make use of that joy of love which God has sent you, without forgetting that this is *love*, that is, a desire for the good for another, and not for oneself. And as soon as this will be love indeed, that is a desire for the good for her, there will be destroyed in it everything which in this sentiment is painful for you and for her.

Love cannot be harmful, so long as it is love, and not the wolf of egotism in the sheepskin of love. One needs but ask oneself: "Am I prepared for his, or her, good never to see him, or her, and to break my relations with him, or her?" If not, it is the wolf, and he has to be

beaten and killed. I know your religious and loving soul, and so am convinced that you will conquer the wolf, if it is he.

Yes, it is impossible to love all alike. And it is a great happiness to love even one more especially, but it must be to love him, or her, and not oneself, one's own enjoyment which is experienced in a communion with him, or her.

I have often thought of falling in love, and have never been able to find a place and meaning for it. But this place and meaning is very clear and definite: it consists in making easier the struggle of passion with chastity. Falling in love must in young people, who are unable to abstain in complete chastity, precede marriage and free young people in their most critical years, from sixteen years until twenty and more, from an agonizing struggle. That is the place of falling in love. But when it invades the lives of men after marriage it is out of place and detestable.

There is a dispute as to whether falling in love is good. For me the solution is clear.

If a man already lives a human, spiritual life, falling in love, love, marriage, will be a fall for him; he will have to give part of his powers to his wife, his family, or even the object of his enamourment. But if he is on the animal stage, eating, working, serving, writing, playing, this falling in love will be for him an uplifting, as it is for animals, for insects.

I do not think that you need any friendship with women, especially any spiritual communion with them. Communion with them is only then good and joyful when in your consciousness you in no way distinguish them from other men.

What you need most of all, it seems to me, is work, work which would absorb all your energies.

I took a liking to a pamphlet sent me lately by Mrs. Stockham on "The Creative Life," as she calls it. She says that when in man there appears, in addition to his usual functions, the sexual need, he ought to know that it is a creative need, which only in its lowest manifestation is expressed in sexual passion; it is a creative ability, and it depends on the will and endeavour, stubborn endeavour to transfer it to another, a physical, or, best of all, a spiritual activity.

I believe that it is indeed the power which takes part in the work of God and the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth; with the sexual act it is only the transmission to others, to the children, of the possibility of taking part in the work of God; with continency and the direct activity of the service of God, it is the highest manifestation of life. The transition is difficult, but it is possible and is accomplished by hundreds and by thousands of men in our very sight.

If you overcome it, it is well; if you do not overcome it, get married, — it will not be so good, but it will not be bad.

It is bad, as Paul says, to burn, bad to carry around this poison, imbibing it with the whole blood. But do not believe yourself in this, that there is something good and softening in cultivating the acquaintance of women. All this is a deception of lust. In the friendship with women, as in that with men, there is much which is joyful, but there is nothing of any particular joy in the friendship with women; but what there is, is a deception of sensuality, of very concealed sensuality, but none the less of sensuality.

You ask what means there is for struggling with passion. Among the minor means, such as work, fasting,



the most effective is poverty, the lack of money, the external aspect of want, a position in which it is evident that you cannot be attractive to any woman. But the chief and only means which I know is the uninterruptedness of the struggle, the consciousness of the fact that the struggle is not an accidental, temporary condition, but a constant, unchangeable condition of life.

You ask me about the Eunuchs, whether the opinion about them is just that they are bad people, and whether the Eunuchs understand correctly the Gospel, Chapter XIX. of Matthew, making themselves and others eunuchs on the basis of the twelfth verse of this chapter.

To the first question, my answer is that there are no bad men, and that all men are the children of one Father, and all are brothers and equal, — nobody is better or worse than anybody else. And judging from what I have heard about the Eunuchs, they live morally and by hard work. To the second question, as to whether they understand correctly the Gospel, making themselves and others eunuchs on its basis, I answer with full confidence that they understand the Gospel incorrectly and, in making themselves, and especially others, eunuchs, they commit acts which are in direct opposition to true Christianity. Christ preaches chastity, but chastity, like any virtue, is of value only when it is attained through an effort of the will and is supported by faith, and not when it is attained by the impossibility of sinning. It is the same as though a man, for fear of glutting himself, produced in himself a disease of the stomach, or, for fear of fighting, tied his hands, or, for fear of swearing, cut out his tongue. God has created man such as he is; he breathed the divine soul into the carnal body in order that this soul should vanquish the lusts of the body (in this does all the life of man consist), and not in order to maim his body, correcting God's work.



If people are drawn to sexual intercourse, this is done for the purpose that the perfection which one generation has not reached may be attained by the next. Wonderful in this respect is God's wisdom : man is ordained to perfect himself, — "Be ye as perfect as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." A true sign of perfection is found in chastity, true chastity, — not only in deeds, but also in the soul, that is, in a full liberation from sexual passion. If men reached perfection and became chaste, the human race would come to an end, and there would be no reason why it should exist upon earth, for men would be like angels, who do not marry and are not given in marriage, as the Gospel says. But so long as men have not reached perfection they procreate a posterity, and this posterity is being perfected and approaches what God has commanded it to attain, and comes nearer and nearer to perfection. But if men acted as do the Eunuchs, the human race would come to an end, and would never attain perfection, — it would not be doing God's will.

This is one reason why I consider the action of the Eunuchs wrong ; another is this, that the Gospel teaching gives the good to men, and Christ says, "My yoke is good, and my burden is light," and forbids any violence against people ; and so the infliction of wounds and sufferings, even though not upon others (which is an obvious sin), but upon oneself, is a violation of the Christian law.

The third reason is this, that the Eunuchs obviously give a wrong interpretation to verse 12 of the nineteenth chapter of Matthew. The whole discourse from the beginning of the nineteenth chapter is about marriage, and Christ not only does not prohibit marriage, but even prohibits divorce, that is, the change of a wife. When his disciples (verse 10) told him that in this way it was very hard to contain oneself, that is, to get along with one wife only, he told them that, although not all persons

were able to contain themselves, as those contain themselves who are born as eunuchs, or those who, like the eunuchs, are mutilated by men, there were some who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, that is, who in spirit vanquished the passion in themselves, and that it was necessary to be like them. That under the words, "Such as made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven," it is necessary to understand the spiritual victory over the flesh, and not the physical mutilation, can be seen from the fact that where it speaks of the physical mutilation it says, "Were made eunuchs of men," and where it speaks of the victory of the spirit over the flesh, it says, "Made themselves eunuchs."

Thus I think, and thus I understand verse 12, but I must add that if the interpretation of the letter should seem inconclusive to you, you must remember that it is only the spirit that gives life. A compulsory or even voluntary mutilation is contrary to the whole spirit of the Christian teaching.

I should like to write to him in that sense, even as I understand it, that the bearing of children in marriage is not fornication; but I should like to consider it better, so as to write with greater thoroughness, because there is also truth in the opinion that carnal intercourse, even with one's own wife, for the sake of lust alone, is sinful. I think that self-mutilation is the same kind of a sin as carnal intercourse for the sake of lust, just as I think that it is as much a sin to gorge oneself as to starve or poison oneself. Only such food is legitimate for the body as makes it possible for a man to serve others, and only such carnal intercourse is legitimate as perpetuates the human race.

The Eunuchs are right when they say that cohabitation with one's wife, if it takes place without spiritual love,

only for the sake of lust, and so not in proper time, is fornication; but they are not right when they say that intercourse with one's wife for the purpose of bringing forth children and in spiritual love is a sin. It is not a sin, but God's will.

Mutilation is, in my opinion, like this. Let us say a man was living intemperately and was in the habit of distilling liquor and brewing beer out of his grain, and of getting intoxicated, and that he suddenly felt that this was bad and sinful, and, instead of giving up his bad habit and learning to do what was proper,—to use the grain for feeding man and beast,—he decided that there was one way of getting rid of the sin, and that was, to burn his grain, and went and did so. What would happen would be this: the sin would still remain the same in him, and his neighbours would still proceed brewing beer and distilling liquor, while he would be unable to feed himself, or his family, or other good people.

With good reason Christ praised the children and said that the kingdom of God was theirs and that what was hidden from the wise was revealed to them. We know that ourselves: if there were no children, if children were not born anew, there would be no hope for the kingdom of God upon earth. Only in them is all the hope. We are all soiled, and it is difficult for us to be cleansed, but with every new generation, with every family, there come new innocent souls that may remain such. The river is turbid and dirty, but many clean springs fall into it, and there is hope that the water will become purified.

It is a great question, and I am glad to think about it. I know this much: lustful fornication and mutilation are equally bad and sinful. But the second, mutilation, is worse. In fornication there is no pride, but there is shame, while in mutilation people have no shame, and pride themselves on this, that they have once for all violated the law of God in order not to succumb to temp-

tation and not to have to struggle. It is necessary to mutilate the heart and then the external mutilation will not be necessary, for external mutilation does not save one from temptation. People fall into this deception because it is altogether impossible to destroy in the heart the lust of fornication and nothing more, it is necessary to destroy all lust, it is necessary to love God in such a way as to despise all the temptation of the world, and that is a long path ; but here it is as though one could by a short way free oneself from the most obvious and disgraceful sin, and the trouble is that by this short cut one frequently arrives nowhere except at a swamp.

The sexual instinct is a striving, if not after fulfilling the whole law, at least after securing the possibility of its fulfilment to one's posterity. The truth of this is confirmed in separate individuals: the more a man approaches the fulfilment of the law, the more he turns away from sexual lust, and vice versa.

Just as man, together with other animals, submits to the law of the struggle for existence, so he submits, like the animals, to the law of sexual propagation ; but man, as a man, finds in himself another law, which is contrary to the struggle, the law of love, and the law of chastity, which is contrary to sexual intercourse for the sake of propagation.

According to the church belief there is to be an end of the world ; according to science man's life on earth, and earth itself, are to come to the same end ; what, then, is it which so provokes people that the good and moral life will also lead to the end of the human race ? Maybe these things coincide. In the statutes of the Shakers it says : " Why should men through continence not free themselves from *violent* death ? " Beautiful.

There is a calculation by Herschel from which it follows that if humanity doubled every fifty years, as it now does, then, if we count seven thousand years from the first pair, there would have been by this time so many people that, if they were placed upon each other over the whole earth, this pyramid would not only reach up to the sun, but would pass the distance twenty-seven times. What deduction do we make from this?

There are only two deductions: either to admit and wish for plagues and wars, or to strive after sexual purity. Only the striving after purity can establish the balance.

The statistics of plagues and wars and celibacy would be interesting. No doubt they are in inverse proportion, that is, the less destructive conditions there are, the more there are celibates: one balances the other.

Another deduction, which involuntarily presents itself and which I am still unable to formulate in a clear manner, is this, that mental cares and calculations about shortening human life are irregular. What is regular is only love; and love is never alone, but is connected with purity. Imagine a man who begets other men and at the same time considers cutting their lives short; both acts taken together are senseless. What would be the right thing to do under such conditions would be to beget one and at least to kill one. One thing is rational: Be ye as perfect as your Father is perfect. But this perfection is in purity and then in love.

All young men of your age, who live under the conditions under which you are living, are in a very dangerous state. The danger consists in this, that at an age when habits are formed which will remain for all time, like creases in the paper, you live without any, without any moral and religious restraint, seeing nothing but those unpleasantnesses of the teaching, which are imposed upon you and from which you try to free yourself



in one way or another, and those most varied gratifications of lust, which attract you on all sides and which you are able to satisfy. Such a state seems to you quite natural and cannot seem otherwise, and you are not at all to blame because it appears so to you, for you grew up in it, and your companions are in the same condition, — but this state is quite exclusive and terribly dangerous. It is terribly dangerous because, if you are to place the whole aim of your life in such a gratification, as it is with you young men, when these lusts are new and especially strong, then it is bound to happen, according to a very well known and indubitable law, that, in order to receive the satisfaction which one is accustomed to receive from the gratification of the appetites, or from savoury food, driving, play, attire, music, one would have to keep adding objects of lust, because lust, once satisfied, does not furnish that enjoyment a second and a third time, and one has to gratify new and stronger lusts. (There even exists a law from which we know that enjoyment increases in an arithmetical progression, while the means for the production of this enjoyment have to be increased by squares.)

And since of all the lusts the strongest is the sexual, which is expressed in enamourment, fondling, onanism, and cohabitation, it always and very soon arrives at this, which is always one and the same. When for these enjoyments can no longer be substituted something new, something stronger, there begins the artificial increase of this very enjoyment by means of intoxicating oneself with wine, tobacco, and sensuous music. This is such a usual path that upon it walk, with rare exceptions, all young men, both rich and poor, and if they stop in time, they return to real life more or less crippled, or perish altogether, as hundreds of young men have perished in my sight.

There is but one salvation in your state: to stop, to come to your senses, to look about, and to find ideals for



yourself, that is, of what you wish to be, and to live in such a way as to attain that which you wish to be.

The whole matter is in continence. As soon as people will find their good in continence, marriages will be moderated.

A man will never succeed in getting married in order to live more happily. To set marriage, the union with whom one loves, as the chief, all-absorbing aim of one's life, is a great error, and a palpable error, if you reflect on it. The aim is marriage. Well, you are married, what then? If there was no other aim before marriage, it will be very difficult, almost impossible, for the two to find it later. It is even sure, if there was no common aim before marriage, that you will under no condition come together, but will be sure to separate. Marriage gives happiness only when there is one common aim. People meet on the road, and say: "Let us go together." "Let us go," and they take each other's hands; but not when, attracted by one another, they get off the road.

All this is so because equally false is the conception, shared by many, that life is a valley of tears, and the other, which is shared by a vast majority, and to which you are inclined by youth and health and riches, that life is a place of enjoyment. Life is a place of service, where one has frequently to endure many hardships, but oftener still to experience very many joys. But there can be true joys only when men themselves understand their life as service, — when they have a definite aim of life which is outside them, outside their personal happiness. People who get married generally forget this completely. There are to be so many happy incidents in marriage, the birth of children, that, it seems, these incidents will form life itself, but that is a dangerous deception. If the parents live on and bring forth children,

without having any aim in life, they will only defer the question of the aim of life and that punishment to which men are subjected who live without knowing for what, — they will only defer it, but not avoid it, because they will have to educate and guide their children, and there is nothing to guide by. Then the parents lose their human properties and the happiness which is connected with them, and become racial beasts. And so I say : people who are preparing themselves to get married, for the very reason that life seems full to them, must more than ever think and make clear to themselves in the name of what each of them is living. But, in order to make this clear to yourself, you must think and consider the conditions under which you live, and your past, and estimate the value of everything in life, — what you consider important, what not important, what you believe in ; that is, what you consider as an eternal, indubitable truth, and what you will be guided by in life. And you must not only find that out and make it clear to yourself, but also experience it in fact and introduce it into your life, because, so long as you do not do what you believe in, you do not know yourself whether you believe or not. I know your faith, and it is this faith, or its sides, which find their expression in deeds, that you must more than ever, even now, make clear to yourself, by putting them into execution. The faith consists in believing that the good is in loving men and being loved by them. To obtain it I know three activities which I practise all the time, which one cannot practise enough, and which you need now more especially. The first thing is, in order to be able to love men and be loved by them, a man must accustom himself to demand as little as possible of them, because if I demand much, I have many privations ; and if I have many privations, I am inclined to reproach, and not to love, — there is much labour.

The second, — in order to love men not in words, but

in deeds, a man must teach himself to do what is useful to men. There is still more labour here, especially for you in your years, when it is proper for a man to study.

The third, — in order to love men and be loved by them, a man must learn meekness, humility, and the art of enduring disagreeable people and unpleasantnesses, — the art of always treating them in such a way as not to grieve any one, and in case of being unable to keep from causing them grief, of being able to choose the lesser grief. And here there is even more work, and constant work, from wakening until falling asleep. And it is most joyous work, because day after day you rejoice at your success in it, and, besides, receive a very joyous, though at first invisible, reward in the love of men.

And so I advise you to think and live as seriously as possible, because only by this means will you find out whether you are indeed walking on the same road, and whether it is good for you to give one another your hands, or not, and at the same time, if you are sincere, to prepare the future for yourself. Your aim in life ought not to be the joy of marriage, but the joy of bringing by your life more love and truth into the world. Marriage consists even in this, that people may aid one another to attain this aim. *Les extrêmes se touchent*. The most egotistical and abominable of lives is that of two people who have united for the purpose of enjoying life, and the highest calling is that of men who live for the purpose of serving God, bringing the good into the world and who have united for it. So do not get entangled: that's it, but not exactly it. Why should a man not choose that which is higher? But having chosen the highest, a man has to put his whole soul into it, — with a little there will be no results.

One should by no means marry for love, but by all means from calculation, except that these two words are

to be understood in the opposite sense from what they are generally understood, that is, one should marry, not from sensual love, but from calculation, not as to where and by what to live (all men live), but as to how probable it is that the future wife would aid, and not hinder me in my living a human life.

Above all, think twenty, a hundred times about marriage. To unite one's life with that of another person in a sexual union is for a moral, sensitive man the most significant act, most pregnant with consequences, which a man can perform. One must always marry just as one dies, that is, only when it is not possible to do otherwise.

Next to death in importance, and next to death in time, there is nothing more important and irretrievable than marriage. And just as death is good only when it is inevitable, and every intentional death is bad, so is also marriage. Marriage is no evil only when it is invincible.

The matter of marriage is in itself not so simple as it seems. Enamourment is a deviation to one side, but cold calculation is a still worse deviation on the other side. If, as you say, one should turn to the first girl, that is, one should not choose for his happiness, then it is necessary to abandon oneself to accident, to fate, which guides the external phenomena, subordinating one's choice to the choice of oneself. Sentiment will confuse a man, but reason will confuse one even more, while this is the greatest thing in life. In my opinion, it is necessary, as in everything in life, and more than in anything else, not to set to oneself the problem of getting married, but to propound the one, eternal problem of how to live well and suffer and wait, and then the time will come and circumstances will make it impossible not to get married. In this way you will be more certain not to err and not to sin.

Princess Márya Aleksyéevna's judgment about marriage is the well-known one: "If young men marry without sufficient means, — there will come children, want, — they will get tired of one another in a year or two, or ten, there will be quarrels, misery, hell." In all this Princess Márya Aleksyéevna is quite right, and predicts correctly, so long as these marrying people have not another sole aim, which is unknown to Princess Márya Aleksyéevna, — not a mental aim, which is cognized by reason, but one which forms the light of life, the attainment of which agitates more than anything else. If this exists, it is well, and Princess Márya Aleksyéevna will be fooled. If this does not exist, there are ninety-nine chances out of a hundred that nothing will come of the marriage but unhappiness.

People who marry like that present themselves to me like people who fall without stumbling. If you have fallen, what is to be done? And if you have not stumbled, what sense is there in falling intentionally?

There are two things that bind you, — your convictions, — faith and love. In my opinion one is enough. The real, true union is human, Christian love; if this shall exist, and upon it shall grow up love, enamourment, it is well and firm. If there is but love, enamourment, it is not exactly bad, but also not good, — still it is possible. Honest natures can with great struggles live through it. But if neither exists, but only a *prétexte* of one or the other, it is certainly bad. A man has to be as severe as possible with himself, and must know in the name of what he is acting.

Novels end by the marriage of the hero and the heroine. They ought to begin with this and end with their unmarrieding, that is, becoming free. For to describe the lives of men in such a way as to break off the description at



marriage, is the same as, in describing a man's travels, to break off in the place where the traveller has fallen among robbers.

Yes, in the Gospel there are no indications of marriage; there is a negation of it, there is a counteraction to debauchery, lust, and divorce for those who are already in marriage; but of the institution of marriage, in the way the church speaks of it, there is not even any mention. Nothing but the insipid miracle at Cana, which confirms marriage to the same extent that Zaccheus's visit confirms the collection of tribute.

Yes, I think that marriage is a non-Christian institution. Christ never married, nor did His disciples, and He never established marriage, but, when He turned to people, of whom some were married, and some not, He told the married people not to change their wives through divorce, as could be done according to the law of Moses (Matt. v. 32), and those who were not married, He told to refrain from getting married, if they could do so (Matt. xix. 10-12). He told both that they must understand that the chief sin consists in looking upon woman as a subject of enjoyment (Matt. v. 28). (Naturally, the same must be understood on the part of woman in relation to man.)

From this proposition naturally result the following moral deductions:

1. We must not consider, as people now do, that every person, man or woman, must by all means enter into wedlock; but, on the contrary, we must consider that every person, man or woman, ought best of all to preserve his or her purity, so that nothing may interfere with giving all the strength to the service of God.

2. We must not look, as people now do, on the fall of man, — man or woman, — that is, on the entrance into sexual intercourse as on an error which may be mended



by a new sexual intercourse (in the shape of marriage) with another person, or even as on a permissible gratification of a need, or even a pleasure; but we must look upon the entrance into the first sexual intercourse of any one with any one whatsoever as upon an entrance into inseverable marriage (Matt. xix. 4-6), which binds the conjugal pair to a definite activity as a redemption of a sin committed.

3. We must not look upon marriage, as they do now, as upon a dispensation to gratify carnal lust, but as upon a sin demanding its redemption.

The redemption of the sin consists, — in the first place, in the liberation of self from lust, the conjugal pair helping one another in this, and in the attainment, as far as this is possible, of the establishment among themselves of the relations, not of lovers, but of a brother and sister; and, in the second place, in the education of the children, the future servants of God, who spring from marriage.

The difference of such a view on marriage from the existing one is very great: people will marry just as much as ever, and just as much will parents think of getting their children married, but the great difference consists in this, as to when the gratification of the lust is considered permissible and legitimate and the greatest happiness in the world, or when it is considered a sin. Following the Christian teaching a man will marry only when he feels that he cannot act otherwise, and having married he will not abandon himself to his lust, but will strive to subdue it (both man and woman); the parents, caring for the spiritual good of their children, will not consider it necessary to get all married, but will get them married, that is, will counsel the fall, or make it easy for them, only when the children are not strong enough to preserve their purity, and only when it shall become clear that they cannot live otherwise. The conjugal pair will not desire, as they do now, a large number of children, but, on the contrary, striving after purity of life, will

be glad that they have but few children, and are able to devote all their strength to the education of those of their children whom they have already, and to those children of others whom they can serve, if they wish to serve God with the education of future servants of God.

The difference will be the same that exists between men who partake of food because they cannot get along without it, and so try to lose as little time and attention as possible on the preparation and consumption of the food, and those who place the chief interest of life in the invention, adaptation, and increase of savouriness and in the consumption of the food, which the Romans carried to the highest degree, when they took emetics<sup>1</sup> in order to be able to eat again.

The first thing I have to say about this is this, that I, in speaking of the manner in which the married pair ought to live, not only do not hint at having lived or living myself as I ought to, but, on the contrary, know from my own hard knocks how I ought to have lived only because I have not lived properly.

I do not take back anything I have said; on the contrary, I should try to say more strongly all I have said, but in reality I have to give an explanation. I must do so, because we are in our lives so far from what we ought to be in conformity with our consciences and with Christ's teaching, that the truth in this respect startles us as much (I know this from experience), as a provincial merchant who is growing rich would be startled by the hint that he ought not to lay by for his family and for church bells, but ought to give away everything he has, if he wishes to be freed from evil.

You say: "Do not sleep together." Of course not. I have thought of it myself. I will write about it everything that I think of it, just as it occurs to me.

<sup>1</sup> Precisely the same is done in our country in order to prevent the birth of children. — *Author's Note.*

There is the sentiment of enamourment, most powerful in man, which has its inception between two persons of the opposite sex who did not know one another, and which leads to marriage; marriage has immediately a child for its consequence. There begins pregnancy and in consequence of it a sexual indifference of the conjugal pair toward one another, an indifference which would be very perceptible, and would interrupt the carnal intercourse, as it is interrupted in the case of the animals, if men did not consider the carnal intercourse a legitimate enjoyment. Such an indifference, which gives way to the care respecting the growth and the nursing of the child, continues to the child's weaning, and in a good marriage (in this does the difference of man from the animal exist) there begins again, with the weaning of the child, the feeling of enamourment between the same conjugal pair.

No matter how far we may be from it, there can be no doubt that it ought to be so, and for these reasons:

In the first place, sexual intercourse at a time when woman is not prepared for bearing children, that is, when she has no menses, has no rational meaning and is nothing but carnal enjoyment and a very bad and disgraceful enjoyment, as every conscientious man knows, which resembles the most heinous and unnatural sexual excesses. A man who abandons himself to it becomes more irrational than an animal, that is, he uses his reason for the purpose of departing from the law of reason.

In the second place, all know and agree to it, that sexual intercourse weakens and exhausts a man, and weakens him in the most essentially human activity,—in his spiritual activity. “Moderation,” the defenders of the present order will say, but there can be no moderation, the moment there is a transgression of the laws established by reason. But the harm of the excess (and intercourse outside the free period is an excess) may for a man not be great with moderation (it is disgusting even to

pronounce this word in relation to such a subject), if he knows one woman; but what will be moderation for the man will be a terrible immoderation for the woman who is in the period of pregnancy or nursing.

I think that the backwardness of women and their hysterical condition are for the most part due to this. It is from this that woman ought to be freed, in order that she may become one body with her husband, and the servant, not of the devil, which she now is, but of God. The ideal is remote, but great. Why should we not strive after it?

I imagine that marriage ought to be like this: the pair cohabit carnally under the invincible pressure of amorousness, the child is conceived, and the conjugal pair, avoiding everything which for her may impair the growth or the nutrition of the child, avoiding every carnal temptation, and not evoking it, as is done nowadays, live together as brother and sister.

As it now is, the man, who was debauched before, transfers his methods of debauchery to his wife, infects her with the same sensuality, and imposes upon her the intolerable burden of being at the same time a sweetheart, an exhausted mother, and a sickly, hysterical person. And the husband loves her as a sweetheart, ignores her as a mother, and despises her for her irritability and hysteria, which he himself induces in her. It seems to me that in this is to be found the key to all the sufferings which in an enormous majority of the cases is hidden in all families.

And so I imagine that husband and wife live like brother and sister; she bears calmly, nurses without impairment, and with this grows morally, and only in free periods do they abandon themselves to amorousness, which lasts some weeks, and again there is calm.

I imagine that this amorousness is that steam pressure which would burst the boiler if the safety-valve did not

rise. The valve opens only during this great pressure, but it is always closed, carefully closed, and it ought to be our aim consciously to close it as tightly as possible, and to put such heavy weights on it that it may not open. In this sense do I understand, "Who can contain, let him contain," that is, let everybody strive never to get married, and having married, to live with his wife as brother and sister. But the steam collects and opens the valves; but we must not open them ourselves, as we do when we look on sexual intercourse as on a legitimate enjoyment. It is lawful only when we cannot abstain from it, and when it bursts forth in spite of our wish.

How are we to determine when we are not able to abstain from it?

How many such questions there are, and how insoluble they seem, whereas how simple they are when you decide them in your own case and for yourself and not in the case of others and for others. For others you know only a certain gradation: an old man abandons himself to sexual intercourse with a prostitute,—that is dreadfully disgusting; a young man does the same,—and it is less disgusting. An old man sensually caresses his wife,—it is quite disgusting, but less so than in the case of a young man with a prostitute. A young man has sensual relations with his wife,—it is still less disgusting, but none the less disgusting. Such a gradation exists for others, and all of us, especially uncorrupted children and young people, know it very well; but in our own case there exists also something else: every man who has known no sexual indulgence, and every virgin, has the consciousness (frequently quite bedimmed by false conceptions) that he or she must guard his or her purity, and the desire to preserve it, and sorrow and shame at its loss, no matter under what conditions. There is a voice of conscience which always says clearly afterward and at



all times that it is bad and shameful. The whole matter is in the consciousness, in the comprehension.

In the world it is considered that it is very good to enjoy love, precisely as though it should be considered good to open the safety-valves and let out the steam; but according to God's law it is good to live only a true life, to work with one's talent for God, that is, to love men and their souls, and among them first the nearest, — one's wife, — and to help her in the comprehension of the truth, and not to strangle her ability of conceiving, by making her the instrument of one's enjoyment, that is, to work with the steam and to use all efforts in order that it may not all escape through the safety-valves.

“But in this way the human race will come to an end.” In the first place, no matter how strictly we may try not to have any sexual intercourse, there are the safety-valves so long as they are needed, and — there will be children. Yes, what is the use of lying? Do we, while defending sexual intercourse, care about the perpetuation of the race? We care about our enjoyment, and we ought to say so. The human race will come to an end? What will come to an end will be the animal man. What a misfortune! Antediluvian animals have been extinguished, and so the animal man will certainly be extinguished (to judge from appearances in space and time). Let it come to an end. I am as little sorry for this two-legged animal as for the ichthyosauri, and so forth; all I care for is that the true life, the love of the beings capable of love, should not be extinguished. But this will not only not come to an end if the human race shall come to an end, because men will out of love renounce the pleasures of lust, but it will be multiplied an endless number of times; this love will increase so much and the beings that experience it will become such that the continuation of the human race will not be



necessary for them. Carnal love is necessary for no other reason than that there should be no interruption of the possibility of working out such beings from men.

The animals abandon themselves to sexual intercourse only when the progeny can be born. Unenlightened men, such as we all are, are ready for it at all times and have even invented the statement that this is a necessity. Through this invented necessity the activity of the mistress ruins the woman, by compelling her to do unnatural work, which is above her strength, during the time while she is pregnant or nursing. With this demand we have ourselves ruined this rational nature in woman, and then we complain of her irrationality, or develop it with books and university courses. Yes, in everything animal, man has still consciously to come up to the animal, and this takes place of itself when the comprehension begins to live, for otherwise the activity of the reason is directed only to the distortion of the animal life.

The question of the sexual relations between husband and wife, to what extent they are legitimate, is one of the most important practical Christian questions, something like the question of property, and never ceases to interest me. And, as always, this question is solved in the Gospel, and, as always, our life has been so remote from the solution which Christ has given that we have been unable not only to apply the Christian solution, but even to comprehend it. Matt. xix. 11, 12: But he said unto them, All men cannot receive the saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

This passage, which has been commented upon so frequently and so falsely, means nothing but this, that, if a man asks what he is to do in relation to the sexual feeling, what to strive after, wherein, in our language, man's ideal is to consist,—he answers: to become a eunuch for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. And he who will attain this will attain the highest; and he who will not attain it will fare well for having striven after it. He who can receive, let him receive.

I think that for man's good, man and woman ought to strive after complete virginity, and then man will be what he ought to be. We must aim beyond the goal, in order to reach the goal. But if man consciously strives, as is the case among us, after sexual intercourse, even though in marriage, he will inevitably fall into what is contrary to the law, into debauchery. If a man consciously strives to live, not for the belly, but for the spirit, his relation to food will be such as it ought to be. But if a man in advance prepares savoury dinners for himself, he will inevitably fall into lawlessness and debauchery.

I have thought a great deal about the marital life,—and, as has always been the case with me, whenever I begin to think seriously, I am urged on and helped from without. The other day I received from America a book by a woman doctor (she had written to me), Stockham, under the title of "Tokology." The book is in general excellent from a hygienic standpoint, but, above all, in one chapter it treats the very subject about which we have been corresponding, and which, of course, solves the question in the same way as you and I do. It is a pleasure to see that the question has long ago been raised, and that the scientific authorities are deciding it in the same sense. It is an immense pleasure to find yourself in the darkness and to see a light far ahead of you. With my

egoism it makes me sad to think that I have passed all my life in a beastly way and that I no longer can mend my life, particularly sad, because people will say : "It is all very well for you, a decaying old man, to say this, but you did not live accordingly. When we get old, we shall be speaking in the same manner." This is where the chief punishment for sins lies : you feel that you are an unworthy instrument for the transmission of God's will, an instrument that is spoiled and soiled. But there is the consolation that others will be such. May God help you and the others.

I have been thinking, among other things, for the epilogue : Marriage was formerly the acquisition of a wife for the purpose of possessing her. Again, the relation to woman was established by war, by captivity. Man arranged for himself the possibility of his lust, without thinking of woman, — the harem. Monogamy changed the number of wives, but not the relation to her. The true relation is quite the opposite. A man can always have a woman and can always contain himself ; but a woman (especially one who has known a man) can with much greater difficulty contain herself when she may have intercourse, which happens with her once in two years. And so, if there is any one who can ask for gratification, it is by no means the man, but the woman. The woman may demand this, because for her it is not a *Genuss*, as for man, but, on the contrary, because she gives herself up with pain, and expects pain, — pain, and suffering, and cares. It seems that marriage ought to be formulated like this : Man and woman come together, loving one another spiritually, and both promise one another that if they shall have children, they will have them of one another. But the demand for sexual intercourse ought to come from her, and not from him.

I think, in the first place, that you judge quite incorrectly when you say that you must not turn to the father of your children (you write: "I will not, and I cannot"). The union between a man and a woman from whom children were born is insoluble, independently of whether it is sanctified in an external manner, by ecclesiastic marriage. And so I think that, no matter who the father of your children may be, whether he be married or single, rich or poor, bad or good, whether he has offended you or not, you *must* turn to him and point out to him, if he has neglected it, his duty to serve his children and their mother with his life. If he should answer to this not only with indifference, but also with contempt and insult, you are none the less obliged before God, before yourself, before your children, and, above all, before him, to turn to him, to remind him, to beg him for his own sake to do his duty, — to ask him meekly, lovingly, but persistently, as the widow of the Gospel begged the judge. This is my well-considered and sincere opinion; you may leave it without attention or follow it. But I have felt it to be my duty to tell it to you.

The physical connection with the accidental husband is one of the means established by God for the dissemination of his truth: for the trial and confirmation of the stronger and the enlightenment of the weaker.

In the Bible and the Gospel it says that man and wife are not two beings, but one, and this is true, not because it was supposedly said by God, but because it is a confirmation of the undoubted truth that the sexual intercourse of two beings, which has childbirth for its consequence, unites these two beings in some mysterious manner, which is distinct from any other union, so that these two in a certain way cease to be two and become one being.

And so I think that the striving after chastity, after the cessation of such relations, can and must be accomplished by this united being, that is, by both the husband and the wife together, and the one who is in advance in this relation must try and influence the other with all means at command, — with simplicity of life, with example, with conviction. So long as they have not met in one desire, they must bear together the burden of the sins of their united being.

In matters of our passions we certainly do things which are contrary and repulsive to our conscience; even so we have to do deeds which are contrary to our conscience, if only we do not regard ourselves as separate beings, but as parts of the united beings of the conjugal pair. The only point is, as in one's personal temptations, so also in the temptation of this united being, not for a moment to fail to recognize the sin as a sin, — to cease fighting.

You are right when you say that there are obligations to oneself, the image and likeness of God, and a man cannot and must not admit a defilement of his body; but this does not refer to those marital relations from which there have been and can be children. The bringing forth of children and their education and nursing destroy the greater part of the weight and criminality of these relations and, besides, for the long period of pregnancy and nursing frees from them.

It is not our business to discuss whether the bringing forth of children is good or not. He who established this redemption for the sin of violating chastity knew what he was doing.

Forgive me if what I shall say shall offend you: In what you say that bearing children one becomes more and more nervous, there is expressed an evil, coarsely egotistical trait. You do not live in order to be merry and healthy, but in order to do the work for which you were appointed. Now this business consists, in addition



to all the most important affairs of your inner life, — if you are ahead of your husband in the matter of chastity, — in helping him advance on this path, and, if you yourself have not fulfilled everything demanded of you, in giving to the world other beings who will be able to fulfil it.

Besides, if certain relations exist between husband and wife, both of them invariably take part in it. If one of them is more passionate, it seems to the other that he or she is absolutely chaste; but this is not true.

I think it is not true even in your case. You merely do not see your sin behind the more noticeable sin of some one else. If you were absolutely pure in this respect, you would be indifferent to where your husband is going to find a gratification of his passion, — indifferent in the sense of jealousy, and would only pity him for his fall; but this is not the case.

If you were to ask practical advice of me, I should say: Choose the best minute of a pure mood of love in your husband, and tell him how hard and painful these relations are to you, and how passionately you wish to be freed from them. If, as you write, he does not agree with you that chastity is good, and will insist, — submit, and, if you shall be pregnant, which you ought to wish, demand your full freedom during the time of pregnancy and nursing. And again do the same, and do not trouble yourself as to what will come of it.

Nothing but good can come from it, for you, and for your husband, and for your children, because, by acting in this manner, you will be seeking, not your happiness and peace, but the fulfilment of what God wants of you.

Forgive me if I have not written well; I tried before God to give utterance to what I have experienced and thought concerning this question.

Oppressive relations with one's wife (or husband) can be untied only by a meek life, just as a knot can be untied



only by submissively following with the whole skein after the thread.

Believe me that there are no external conditions which are good in themselves, and a senseless man who is married to an angel, and another who is married to a devil, is equally dissatisfied, and that many, not only many, but nearly all who are dissatisfied with their marital state (they are all of them dissatisfied) think that there can be nothing worse than their situation. Consequently it is all the same with everybody.

If you look upon woman as an object of enjoyment, even if it were your own wife, — so much the worse if she is your wife, — you are committing adultery and are sinning. With the fulfilment of the law of bread labour, cohabitation has the aim of impersonal enjoyment, of an aid, a continuator; but with superabundance, — that of debauchery.

The gardener's wife has again had a child, and again there came an old woman and took the baby away somewhere.

All are terribly agitated. The use of means for preventing birth is nothing, but for this there are not sufficient condemnatory words.

It was learned to-day that the old midwife has returned and has brought the child back. On the road the midwife came across others who were taking with them just such children. One of these children was given the nipple too far down into the mouth. It pulled it in, and strangled. In one day they brought twenty-five children to Moscow. Of these twenty-five, nine were not accepted, because they were legitimate or sick.

N—— went in the morning to admonish the gardener's wife. The gardener's wife warmly defended her husband,

saying that with their poverty and indefiniteness of life she could not have any children. Her breast even does not fill up. In short, it is inconvenient for her. . . .

Just before that I was swinging three waifs, and I came across another boy, Vása's nephews. Altogether there is a swarm of this brood of children. They are born and they grow up to become drunkards, syphilitics, savages.

And with all this they talk of the salvation of the lives of men and children and of their destruction. What is the sense of breeding savages? What good is there in this? They ought not to be killed, nor ought people to stop breeding them, but they ought to employ all their forces in order to make men out of the savages. This is the only good. But this deed is not done with words alone, but with the example of life.

If you have fallen, know that there is no other redemption of this sin than (1) freeing both yourselves from the offence of the lust and (2) bringing up the children as servants of God.

Be both of you (husband and wife) careful and, more than anything, attentive to your mutual relations, so that the habits of irritation and alienation may not steal in. It is not an easy matter to become one soul and one body. We must try. And the reward for the endeavour is great. I know one chief means for this: amidst your conjugal love do not for a moment forget or lose the love and respect of man to man. Let there be relations of man to wife, but at the base of all let the relations be as to a stranger, a near friend, — this is the chief relation. In them is the power.

Do not strengthen your attachment for one another, but with all your strength increase the caution in your

relations, the alertness, so that there may be no conflicts. That is a terrible habit. With no one are there such close and many-sided relations as with a husband or wife, and for this reason we always forget to think of them, to be conscious of them, just as we cease being conscious of our body. And that is where the trouble is.

For a conjugal pair to be happy, as they write about happiness in novels, and as every human heart wishes for it, it is necessary that there should be concord. But in order that there should be concord, it is necessary for husband and wife to look in the same way upon the world and the meaning of life (this is particularly necessary in relation to children). But that husband and wife should understand life alike, should stand on the same level of comprehension, will happen as rarely as that one leaf of a tree should precisely cover another. And since this does not exist, the only possibility of concord, and so of happiness, consists in this, that one of the two should submit his or her comprehension to the other.

Here lies the chief difficulty : the spouse with the superior comprehension cannot, in spite of his or her best desire, surrender it to the inferior comprehension. It is possible for the attainment of concord not to sleep, not to eat, to make beds for flowers, etc., but it is impossible to do that which you consider wrong, sinful, not only irrational, but directly opposed to reason, and bad. In spite of all the consciousness that the happiness of both depends on concord, that this concord is necessary for happiness and for the correct education of the children, a wife cannot contribute to her husband's intoxication or gambling, and the husband cannot contribute to his wife's balls and to teaching his children dancing and fencing and religion according to Filarét's Catechism.

For the observance of concord and not only of happiness, but also of the true good, which coincides with love

and union, the one who stands on the lower level of comprehension and feels the higher comprehension of the other must submit, and not only submit in worldly, practical matters, in such things as what to eat, how to eat, how to dress, how to live, but must also submit in the direction of life, in the aims of the activity.

If it should turn out that I like billiards, or the races, or my ambition more than my children, there might be place for reproaches; or if it should turn out that I am a coward and am afraid to go against the existing order, lest my peace be disturbed, these reproaches might touch me. But if I love God, that is, the good and truth, I certainly love my children in the best way possible and for them do the very best I can do.

For happiness, still more, for the true good of the married pair and of the children who live with them, and for the good of all their near friends, the concord of the spouses is indispensable; discord, quarrels, are a misfortune for them, for the children, and an offence for people, a most terrible hell. That this may not be, but one thing is needed: one of the two must submit.

It seems to me that it is so easy and such a joy for that one of the marital pair to submit who understands that his other half stands higher, understands something not quite accessible to him or her, but something that is good and divine, — one always feels that, — that I wonder why they do not do it.

It is necessary to unite serving men and serving the family, not by distributing the time mechanically between this and that, but chemically, by adding to the care of the family, the education of the children, an ideal meaning in the service of men. Marriage, true marriage, which is manifested in the birth of children, is in its true significance only a mediate service of God, a service of God through the children. For this reason marriage, conjugal

love, is always experienced by us as a certain alleviation and pacification. It is the moment of the transmission of one's work to another. "If I have not done what I could and should have done, here are my children to take my place, — they will do it."

The real point is that they should do it and that they should be educated to be, not a hindrance to God's works, but His labourers, so that, if I was unable to serve the ideal which was standing before me, I may be able to do everything in my power so that my children may serve Him. This gives the whole programme and the whole character of the education, and supplies a religious significance to education; and it is this which chemically unites into one the best, self-sacrificing tendencies of youth and the care of the family.

I welcome newly arrived Iván. Whence does he come? What is he for? Whither is he going? And who is he? It is well for those to whom the protoplasm forms a sufficient answer to these questions; but those whom this answer does not satisfy must inevitably *believe* that there is a deep significance in Iván's appearance and life, and that we shall understand this significance in proportion as we shall do everything we must in relation to him, — to Iván.

Men of a family must either abandon their wives and children, — and this cannot be done, — or they must live in a settled state. This wandering must be painful for the wives who for the most part (I hope they will forgive me this), if at best they lead a Christian life, lead it not for God, but for their husbands. For them, the poor women, this is difficult. And so, it seems to me, they should be taken care of and pitied. Barely has some balance established itself between husband and wife, and they manage to get on their legs, when there comes the



difficulty of the migration and of the new establishment. It is above their strength, and every building which is reared with labour caves in. I know, you will say that there is no need of living with the family: Leave your wife and children, as Christ has said; but I believe that this may be done only by mutual consent, and there is another saying of Christ, and one which is more obligatory: Man and wife are not twain, but one flesh, and that those whom God has united man cannot sever. People like you and other happy and strong men must not get married, but if they have married and have children, they must not violate what has been done, must not wipe out the sin, but bear its consequences. I think that it is a great sin to ask or advise husbands to abandon their wives. It is true, it seems that God's work will gain from it, that without a wife I shall do a great deal more than now, but frequently it only seems so. If I could be absolutely pure, absolutely without sin, it would be so. We must not ask and advise this for this other reason, that with such a view people who have sinned, that is, married people, would appear to themselves and to others as people who are done for, and that is not good. I think that sinners and weak people can also serve God.

Having once come to sin through marriage, we must bear the consequences of our sin in the best, most Christian manner, and not free ourselves from it, by committing a new sin, and we must in this situation serve God with all our strength.

You understand the words of the Gospel, Leave father and mother, and wife, and children, and follow me, in too literal a sense. In respect to the meaning of these words, — especially as to how we ought to solve those conflicts and contradictions which take place between domestic ties and the demands of Christ, that is, of truth, — I think that the solution of these questions cannot be from with-



out, by means of rules and prescriptions, and each person solves it according to his powers. The ideal, of course, always remains one and the same, and is expressed in the Gospel: Leave your wife, and follow me. But to what extent a man may do so, that only he and God know.

You ask what is meant by the words, Leave your wife. Does it mean to go away from her or to stop sleeping with her and begetting children? Of course, "to leave" means to do this, that your wife should not be as a wife, but as any other woman, as a sister. In this does the ideal lie. And this ought to be done in such a way as not to irritate the wife, not to offend her, not to subject her to anger and to temptation. And that is terribly hard to do. A married man who strives after the Christian life feels within his heart the whole difficulty of healing the wound which he himself has inflicted. This one thing I think and say . . . and that is, being married, one should strain all one's life and all one's forces to become unmarried without increasing the sin.

Yes, Christ's ideal of serving the Father is a service which first of all excludes the care both of life and of the continuation of the species. So far an attempt at renouncing these cares has not put a stop to the human race. What will happen in the future, I do not know.

I do not like to speak of the peculiarity of our time, but, in the relations of husbands and wives, of men and women, amidst the rich and the poor, there is in every country something peculiar. Thus the relations of husbands and wives, it seems to me, are spoiled by that spirit, not only of insubmission, but even of animosity of the women against the men, of rancour, of a desire to show that they are not worse than the men, that they can do the same as the men, and at the same time by the absence of that moral, religious feeling which, if it existed

before in the women, is replaced by the maternal feeling. I believe that women are absolutely equal with men, but the moment they marry and become mothers, there naturally takes place a division of labour in the conjugal pair. The maternal feelings absorb so much energy that there is little of it left for moral guidance, and the moral guidance naturally passes over to the husband. So it has been ever since we have known the world. Now, since this natural order of things has been misused, — since the guidance of man has been asserted through rude force, and women were liberated by Christianity, — woman has ceased to obey man from fear, or to delegate to him the guidance of life from a consciousness that it is better so; and there began a tangle and disorganization of life, which is noticeable in all layers of society and under all conditions.

The mental fashion of lauding the women, of asserting that they are spiritually not only equal, but even superior to men, is a very bad and harmful fashion.

There can be no doubt as to this, that women ought not to be limited in their rights, that we must treat a woman with the same deference and love as men, that she is legally man's equal; but to assert that the average woman is endowed with the same spiritual power as man, to expect to find in every woman what you expect to find in every man, means intentionally to deceive oneself, and — to deceive oneself to the injury of woman.

If we expect from woman the same as from man, we shall be demanding it; and if we do not find what we demand, we shall become irritated, shall ascribe to ill-will what is due to impossibility.

Thus it is not a cruelty to woman to recognize that she is what she is, — a spiritually weaker being; it is a cruelty to recognize her as equal.

What I call weakness or lesser spiritual power is the

lesser submission of the flesh to the spirit, especially — woman's chief characteristic — a lesser faith in the commands of reason.

The greatest number of sufferings which result from the intercourse of men and women result from the absolute misunderstanding of one sex by the other.

Very few men understand what children mean to a woman, what place they occupy in her life; and still fewer women understand what the duty of honour, the social duty, the religious duty, mean to a man.

A man may understand, though he has never been pregnant or borne a child, that it is hard and painful to be pregnant and to bear a child, and that it is an important matter; but there are extremely few women who will understand that spiritually to carry and bring forth a new conception of life is a hard and an important matter. They will understand it for a minute, but immediately forget it. And the moment their cares, even if it be of their household, of their attire, appear on the scene, they can no longer remember the reality of men's convictions, and all that appears to them as an unreal invention in comparison with cakes and pieces of chintz.

I have been struck by the thought that one of the chief causes of an inimical feeling between husbands and wives is their rivalry in the matter of conducting their family.

The wife must not recognize her husband as sensible and practical, because, if she did so, she would have to do his will, and vice versa.

If I were now writing the *Kreutzer Sonata*, I would bring this out.

The insipidity of our life is due to the power of the women; but the power of the women is due to the in-

continence of the men ; thus the cause of the monstrosity of life is due to the incontinence of the men.

An attractive woman says to herself : " He is clever, he is learned, he is famous, he is rich, he is great, he is moral, holy ; but he surrenders himself to me, a foolish, ignorant, poor, insignificant, immoral woman ; consequently reason and learning and everything are nonsense." This undoes them and makes them bad.

After all, it is always those against whom violence is used that rule, that is, those who fulfil the law of non-resistance. Thus women try to obtain their rights, but they rule us for the very reason that they have been subjected by force. The institutions are in the hands of men, but public opinion is in the hands of women. And public opinion is a million times more powerful than all the laws and the army. As a proof that public opinion is in the hands of women, may serve this, that not only the arrangement of the house, the food, is determined by the women, but that the women spend the wealth, consequently guide the labours of men ; the success of the productions of art and of books, and even the appointment of rulers, is determined by public opinion, but public opinion is determined by the women.

Somebody has well said that it is the men who need to seek their emancipation from the women, and not vice versa.

It is proper for women to sustain life by childbirth, the education of their children, the furnishing of new forces in place of those used up ; it is proper for men to direct these forces, that is, life itself. Either can do both ; but this is proper.

What can there be more stupid and more harmful for the women than the modern talk about the equality

of the sexes, or even about the superiority of the women over the men. For a man with a Christian world conception there can naturally be no question about giving any rights exclusively to men, or about not respecting and loving a woman like any other person; but to assert that woman has the same spiritual forces as man, especially that woman can just as much be guided by reason and can believe in the same way as man, is to demand of woman what she cannot give (I do not speak of exceptions), and to provoke in her irritation, which is based on the supposition that she does not want to do what she cannot do, without having for it a categorical imperative in reason.

If the question is about being removed by man from those cares and labours which result from education, or rather from tending on little children,—from putting them to bed, washing their linen and, in general, all linen, from preparing food for them and, in general, for all, from making clothes for them, and so forth,—this is in the highest degree not only un-Christian and not good, but also unjust.

Woman, as it is, bears the greater labour of carrying and nursing the children, and so, it would seem, it is natural that all the other cares ought to be taken over by man as much as it is possible without interfering with his work, which is also necessary for the family. And so it would be by all means, if the barbarous habit of throwing the whole burden of work on the weaker, and, therefore, on the oppressed, had not taken such firm root in our society. This has so permeated our habits that, in spite of the equality of woman as recognized by men, the most liberal man, as well as the most chivalrous, will warmly defend a woman's right to be a professor, a preacher, or will at the risk of his life rush to lift up a handkerchief which a woman has dropped, and so forth,



but will never fall upon the idea of washing the diapers which their common child has soiled, or of making a pair of trousers for his son, when his wife is pregnant, or is nursing, or simply tired, or simply wants to read or think awhile to make up for the time lost in carrying and nursing.

Public opinion is so distorted in this respect that such acts would be found *ridicules*, and it would take great courage to do them.

Here is the real emancipation of woman :

Not to consider any work woman's work such as it would be a disgrace to touch, and to aid them with all our strength, for the very reason that they are physically weaker, and to take away from them all the work which we can take upon ourselves.

The same in the education of the girls, having in view the fact that they will probably have to bring forth children, and so will have less leisure ; in view of this fact the schools ought to be arranged, not worse, but even better than those for men, so that they may in advance gain strength and knowledge. They are capable of that.

It is quite true that in relation to women and their labour there exist many very harmful prejudices which have taken strong root since antiquity, and it is still more true that it is necessary to struggle against them. But I do not think that a society which will establish reading-rooms and apartments for women will be a means for the struggle. I am not provoked by the fact that women receive smaller wages than men, — wages are established according to the worth of the labour, — but by this, that the woman who bears, nurses, brings up little children is also burdened with the work of the kitchen, that she has to broil at the stove, wash the dishes and the linen, make the clothes, and wash the tables, floors, and windows.



Why is this dreadfully hard labour thrown on woman's shoulders? A peasant, factory hand, official, and any other man may have nothing to do, but he will be lying and smoking, leaving it to a woman (and the woman submits to it), who is frequently pregnant, or sick, or with children, to broil at the stove or to bear the terrible labour of washing the linen, or of tending her sick babe at night. And all this is due to the superstition that there is such a thing as woman's work.

It is a terrible evil, and from this come numerous diseases of women, premature aging, death, dulling of the women themselves and of their children.

For the agreement of the conjugal pair it is necessary that in their views on the world and on life, if they do not coincide, the one who thinks less should submit to the one who thinks more.

Women have always recognized men's power over them. It could not have been otherwise in the non-Christian world. Man is strong, and so man exerted power. Thus it has been in the whole world (excluding the doubtful amazons and the law of maternity), and thus it is even now among nine hundred and ninety-nine thousandths of the human race. But in order that the freedom of the slaves and of woman may not be a misfortune, it is necessary that the emancipated should be Christians, that is, should use their lives in serving God and men, and not themselves. What, then, is to be done? This one thing is to be done: it is necessary to draw men to Christianity, to convert them to Christianity. But this can be done only by doing in life Christ's law.

I have, among other things, thought a great deal about women, about marriage, and I should like to tell about it, of course, not about the modern little idols, the univer-

sity courses, but about woman's great eternal destination. Many perverse things in this respect are preached precisely in the circles of intelligent women, and namely this: for example, they preach that woman ought not to be exclusive, — that she must not love her children more than any one else. They preach many misty, obscure things about evolution, about her equality with man; but this proposition, that woman must not love her children more than strangers, is preached everywhere, at all times, is considered an axiom, and as a practical rule includes in itself the essence of the doctrine; but this very proposition is quite false.

It is the destiny of every man, both man and woman, to serve men. With this general proposition, I believe agree all men who are not immoral. The difference between men and women in the fulfilment of this destiny is great, according to the means with which they serve men. A man serves men with physical, and mental, and moral labour. The means of his ministration are very varied. The whole activity of humanity, with the exception of childbirth and nursing, forms the arena of his ministration to men. But woman, in addition to her ability to serve men with all the same sides of her being as man, is by her constitution destined and inevitably drawn to that ministration which alone is excluded from the sphere of man's ministration. The ministration to humanity is naturally divided into two parts: one — the increase of the good in existing humanity, the other — the continuation of humanity itself. Men are preëminently destined for the first, for they are deprived of the possibility of serving the second. Women are preëminently destined for the second, because they are exclusively adapted for it. It is impossible, wrong, and sinful (that is, a mistake) to forget and to wipe out the second, as people try to do. From this distinction result

the duties of either, duties which are not invented by men, but lie in the nature of things. From this same difference results the valuation of man's and woman's virtue and vice, — a valuation which has existed through all the ages and which can never cease to exist, so long as men have reason.

It has always been so, and it will always be so, that a man who has passed his life in his manifold male labour, and a woman who has passed her life in bearing, nursing, and bringing up her children, will feel that they are doing what is right, and they will evoke men's respect and love, because both have fulfilled their indubitable destiny. Man's destiny is more varied and broader, woman's destiny is more uniform and narrower, but deeper, and so it has always been and it always will be so that a man, who has hundreds of duties and has been false to one or ten of them, will not be a bad or harmful man, so long as he has performed nine-tenths of his destiny. But a woman, who has three duties, will, by becoming untrue to one of them, perform only two-thirds of them, and, having become untrue to two, becomes negative, harmful. Public opinion has always been such and always will be such, because such is the essence of the matter. A man, to do God's will, must serve Him in the sphere of physical labour, and of thought, and of morality; with all these works is he able to accomplish his destiny; for woman the means for serving God are preëminently and almost exclusively (because no one but her can do it) the children.

Man is called to serve God only through his works; woman is called to serve only through her children.

And so the love of her children, which is inherent in woman, the exclusive love, with which it is quite vain to struggle by means of reason, will always be, and always must be, peculiar to the woman as mother. This love for the child in babyhood is not at all egoism, as we are falsely taught to believe, but the love of the labourer for

the work which he is doing, when it is in his hands. Take this love for the object of his work away from him, and the work is impossible.

So long as I am making a boot I love it more than anything, just as a mother loves her child; if they spoil it for me, I shall be in despair; but I love it so long as I am working at it. When I am done with it, there is left an attachment, a feeble and illegitimate predilection; even so it is with the mother.

Man is called to serve men by means of varied labours, and he loves these labours so long as he is at work over them; woman is called to serve men through her children while she is making them, that is, rearing and bringing them up.

In this do I see a complete equality of man and woman, — in their common destiny to serve God and men, in spite of the difference of the form of this service. This equality is manifested in this also, that one is as important as the other, that one is as unthinkable as the other, that one conditions the other, and that in order to attain their destiny, the knowledge of the truth is indispensable to both, and that without this knowledge the activity both of the man and the woman becomes, not useful, but harmful, to humanity.

Man is called to fulfil his varied work, but his work is only then useful, and his work (to plough the field or make cannon), and his mental activity (to make men's life easier or to count out money), and his religious activity (to bring men closer together or sing a mass) are only then fruitful, when they are done in the name of the highest truth accessible to man.

The same is true of woman's destiny: her bringing forth, nursing, and rearing of children will be useful to humanity when she will bring up children, not simply for her pleasure, but as future servants of humanity, when the education of these children will be accom-

plished in the name of the highest truth accessible to her, that is, when she will educate her children in such a way that they may be able to take as little as possible from men and give them as much as possible. The ideal woman will, in my opinion, be she who, having acquired the highest world conception, — the faith which will be accessible to her, — will abandon herself to her feminine calling, which is invincibly inherent in her, of bringing forth, nursing, and educating the largest number of children capable of working for men according to the world conception which she has made her own. But this world conception is not drawn from university courses, but is acquired only by not closing eyes and ears, and by meekness of heart.

Well, and those who have no children, who have not married, widows? They will do well, if they will take part in man's varied work.

And every woman who is through bearing children will, if she has strength, be able to busy herself with this aid to man in his work, and this aid is very precious. . . .

A good domestic life is possible only with the conscious conviction, educated in woman, of the necessity of permanent submission to man. I have said that this is proved by the fact that this has been so as far back as we know the life of man, and by this, that domestic life with children is a voyage in a frail boat, which is possible only if all submit to one man. Such they have always recognized man to be, because, since he does not bear children or nurse them, he is able to be a better guide to his wife than the wife can be to her husband.

But are women really always inferior to men? Not at all. The moment both are chaste, they are equal. But what is meant by this, that women now demand, not only equality, but also supremacy? Only this, that the



family is evolving, and so the older form is falling to pieces. The relations of the sexes are looking for new forms, and the old form is decomposing.

It is impossible to tell what the new form will be, though many things may be noticed. Maybe a greater number of men observing chastity; there may be temporary marriages, coming to an end after the birth of children, so that the conjugal pair separates after the birth of children and remains chaste; maybe the children will be brought up by society. It is impossible to foresee the new forms. But what is unquestionable is this, that the old form is decomposing, and that the existence of the old form is possible only with the submission of wife to husband, as it has always and everywhere been, and as happens there where the family is still preserved.

Yesterday I read *Without Dogma*. There is a very delicate description of love of woman,—tenderly, much more delicately done than with the French, where it is sensual, or with the English, where it is Pharisaical, or with the Germans, where it is inflated; and I thought I might write a novel of chaste love, . . . for which the transition to sensuality is impossible, which forms the best defence against sensuality. Yes, is this not the only salvation from sensuality? Yes, yes, it is. It is for this that man was created as man and woman. Only with woman can one lose his chastity, and only with her can one keep it. It is good to make a note of it. . . .

Man, like any animal, submits to the law of the struggle and to the sexual instinct for the strengthening of the species; as a rational, loving, divine being, he submits to the reverse law, not that of the struggle with his rivals and enemies, but that of meekness, endurance of insults, and of love for them, and not that of the sexual instinct, but that of chastity.



One of the most important works of humanity consists in the education of a chaste woman.

Woman, so a legend tells, is the instrument of the devil. She is in general stupid, but the devil gives her his intellect for her support, when she is working for him. You behold, she has done wonders of the mind, of far-sightedness, or constancy, in order to do abominable things; but the moment it is not a question of an abomination, she is unable to understand the simplest thing, does not reflect beyond the present moment, and has no endurance, no patience (except in childbirth and the bringing up of children).

All this has reference to the non-Christian, the unchaste woman. . . . Oh, how I should like to show to woman the whole meaning of the chaste woman. The chaste woman (the legend about Mary is not given without good reason) will save the world.

Woman's destiny is above all else and preëminently man's destiny, of which I have spoken before. Marriage and children in comparison with celibacy is the same as the conditions of village life as compared with the luxurious life of the city: the conditions of life, celibacy or the family, cannot in themselves influence man. There may be a holy and a sinful celibacy, and there may be a sinful and a holy family.

Every girl, and you in particular, the same as a man in whom an inner spiritual life is beginning, I advise as much as possible to keep away from everything which in our society supports in the girl the idea of the necessity, the desirability, of marriage, and predisposes to it,—novels, music, idle prattle, dances, games, cards, even attire. Truly, it is more pleasant to wash one's own shirt (and for the soul it is so much more useful) than to play secretary all evening, even with the most clever of

men. Above all else, that conception, so universal in the world, that it is shameful not to marry and to remain an old maid, is just as contrary to truth as all worldly opinions in regard to questions of life. Celibate life, filled with good works, celibate, because the works which fill this life are all above marriage (and such works are all works of love for your neighbour, of giving a cup of water to drink), are an infinite number of times higher than all domestic life. (Matt. xix. 11.) All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. Thus all men of all nations and of all ages have always looked with the greatest respect and emotion upon the men and women who remained celibate, not from compulsion, but for the sake of God. But in our society they are the most ridiculous of people. Indeed, they are just like those who are poor for the sake of God, and those who did not know how to make money.

But to every girl, and to you, I give the advice to set before you as an ideal the service of God, that is, the keeping and increasing in yourself of the divine spark, and so — celibacy, if marriage hinders this ministration; but if it should happen that, submitting to your selfish feeling for one man, you should get married, do not rejoice and become proud, as generally happens, of your position as wife and mother, but, without losing sight of the chief aim of life, the service of God, see to it with all your strength that your exclusive and egoistical attachment for the family does not interfere with your serving God.

I have always thought that one of the surest signs of the seriousness of relations to moral questions is strictness to oneself in the sexual question. . . .

The offence into which N—— has fallen is very intelligible and peculiar to precisely such honest and truthful natures as I imagine him to be. The relations were established, and he wanted not to conceal anything, but openly

and frankly to confess them, by giving them a character of spirituality.

I fully understand his idea: to utilize that spiritual elation which enamourment gives, in order to use this elation for God's work. That is possible, and I think that the energy of men who are in this state may be considerably raised, and may give what to us seems to be unexpectedly great results. I have more than once seen this, and I have known such cases; but what is terrible here is this, that with the destruction of enamourment (which is very possible and very probable) not only this access of energy may fall, but also every interest in God's work, of which, too, I have seen examples. And that this happens and can happen proves that God's work, the service of Him, cannot and must not lean on anything, and everything else must be based on the consciousness of the necessity and the joy of this service.

Thus it is possible (and this is often done) to increase the energy of serving God with human glory, and again there is the danger of growing indifferent to God's work the moment the approval of men is destroyed.

All this you know and have given utterance to, but I wanted to add just one thing to what I wrote to you in my last letter as to my agreeing with N—— that the union of a man and a woman is good when it has for its aim the conjoined service of God and men, — namely, that the conjugal, the bodily, tie does not exactly add strength in the service, but that for certain people, who are swayed by the restlessness of the necessity of enamourment, it removes this unrest, which interferes with the application of one's whole force to the service; and so, although chastity, if it is full, is a most advantageous condition for the service, — for some people marriage, by quieting them and removing the obstacle, strengthens the possibility of their service. But with it, — and this is the main thing I wanted to say, — it is necessary that

men should understand and recognize, outside of marriage, and in marriage, that the quality of amorousness and of that spiritual elation which takes place at this time are intended, not as an amusement, not as an enjoyment, not for artistic creations (many think so), not for the increase of energy in the service of God, as N—— thinks, but only for a sexual, marital union with one husband and one wife for the production of children and the mutual emancipation from lust. But every direction of this ability to something else can only make the path of man's life harder, and not easier and pleasanter.

And so I fully agree with you that this is a most dangerous offence against which one cannot be sufficiently cautious. "Well," they say, "why not be friendly with persons of the opposite sex as with those of the same sex?" There is no reason why we should not, and the more we love, the better it is. But a sincere man, who is serious in matters of morality, will immediately notice, as N—— has, that such relations with women will be different. If a man is not going to deceive himself, he will always observe that the approximation takes place faster than usual; that the bicycle rides easily and fast, and that there is no need of the same efforts as usual; and that, therefore, there must be a cause for it. And as soon as a man, who is serious in matters of morality, notices this and does not wish to ride down-hill, knowing that the motion will be increasing all the time and will lead to marriage or to an exclusive feeling, he will come to a stop.

Marriage, of course, is good and indispensable for the continuation of the race, but if so, it is necessary that the parents should feel in themselves the strength to educate their children, not as drones, but as servants of God and of men. And for this it is necessary to be able to live, not by the labours of others, but by one's own, giving more than receiving from men.

But we have a bourgeois rule that a man may marry only when he is pressing hard down on the backs of others, that is, when he has means. Exactly the opposite is needed: only he may marry who can live and bring up a child, without having any means. Only such parents will be able to educate their children well.

I have looked through the book.

It is impossible to write about it and reply to it, just as it is impossible to reply to a man's proof that it is agreeable and harmless to cohabit with corpses. A man who does not feel what the elephants feel, that cohabitation is, in general, an act which lowers oneself and one's mate, and so is abominable, an act in which a man involuntarily pays his tribute to his animality, and which is redeemed only by the fact that it fulfils that purpose (childbirth) for which the necessity of this disgusting, debasing act, invincible though it is at a certain time, is inherent in his nature,—to such a man, in spite of his ability to reason, since he is standing on the level of an animal, it is impossible to explain or prove this. I do not even speak of the fallacy of Malthusianism, which places objective considerations (and false ones at that) at the base of the business of morality, which is always subjective,—nor even of the fact that between murder, abortion, and this method there is no material difference.

Pardon me: it is a shame and an abomination to speak seriously of this. It is necessary to speak and to think rather of what distortion or dulness of the moral feeling could have brought men to this. It is not for us to quarrel with them, but to cure them. Really, an ignorant, drunken Russian peasant, who believes in "Friday," who would look with horror upon such an act, and who always looks upon the act of cohabitation as upon a sin, stands immeasurably above the people who write well



and have the boldness to quote philosophy in confirmation of their savagery.

No kind of human crimes against the moral law do people conceal from one another with such caution as those which are called sexual lust; and there is no crime against the moral law which is so common to all men, embracing them in the most varied and most terrible forms; there is no crime against the moral law upon which men look with such disagreement, — some regarding a certain act as a terrible sin, and others looking upon the same act as upon a customary convenience or pleasure; there is no crime in respect to which so many Pharisaical utterances have been made; there is no crime the relation to which so correctly indicates man's level; and there is no crime more pernicious for separate individuals and for the progress of all humanity.

These thoughts are very simple and very clear for him who thinks in order to know the truth. These thoughts appear strange, paradoxical, and even incorrect to him who reasons, not in order to find the truth, but in order to consider true his life with all its vices and aberrations.

There is never any end to this matter. I even now think of the same (of the sexual question), and it still appears to me that there is much left to be explained and added. And this is comprehensible because the matter is of such enormous importance and novelty, and the strength, to speak without any false modesty, is so weak and so little in keeping with the importance of the subject.

For this reason I think that all must work who are sincerely interested in the matter, — all must work out this subject according to their strength. If each man will sincerely say from his personal point of view what



he thinks and feels about this subject, many obscure points will be made clear, what is usually and falsely hidden will be revealed, what seems strange from unwontedness to see it will cease seeming such, and many things which seem natural from the habit of living badly will cease seeming such. Through a happy chance I have been able, more than others, to turn the attention of society to this subject. Others must continue the work from various sides.

THE END.









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